

Elan Ness-Cohn

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OVERVIEW

Computational Biologist with software and research publications in top academic journals. Brings a unique blend of math & science literacy, wet & dry lab experience, and educational pragmatism, all backed by strong R skills and desire to continue pushing the boundary of human knowledge.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. (Biology)

Northwestern University, Evanston

08/2017–12/2021 (Anticipated)

- Dissertation combined data science and biology to develop new computational methods for understanding the molecular mechanisms and dynamics of circadian rhythms.
- Published in high profile academic journals including Science and Bioinformatics.

Graduate Certificate in Teaching

Northwestern Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching

2020–2021

B.Sc. (Biology), Concentration (Education)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

2013–2017

COMPUTATIONAL & TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming: R • Python • Bash • R Shiny • \LaTeX • git • SQL • HPC (SLURM)

Machine Learning: Tidymodels • Keras • Tensorflow

Data Mining: statistical analysis • dimensionality reduction • clustering • visualization

Modeling: dynamical systems • topological analysis • toy model development

Research: algorithm & pipeline development • inter-disciplinary collaboration • software development

Laboratory: CRISPR/Cas-9 genome editing • plasmid design • molecular cloning • qPCR

Languages: English • Hebrew

EXPERIENCE

Ph.D. Candidate, Northwestern University

08/2017–date

Topology Inspired Methods for the Design and Analysis of Transcriptomic Time-Series Data in Circadian Biology Research

- Developed a suite of open-source software packages for optimizing the design and analysis of *omic time-series experiments in circadian biology research.
- Lead multiple collaborative projects with peers leveraging inter-disciplinary expertise to investigate hypotheses and problem-solve obstacles.
- Mentored undergraduate and graduate students through various computational research techniques and organizational skills.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

2016–2017

Engineering Human Pluripotent Stem Cells With Insulin Reporter to Model Type 1 Diabetes

- Designed/cloned fusion gene plasmid and accompanying CRISPR/Cas9 guide RNAs for targeted tagging of gene of interest.
- Supported in the *in vitro* differentiation of pluripotent stem cells to insulin producing beta-like cells.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

2015–2016

Regulation of Stress Physiology and Longevity by the EIF3 Translation Initiation Complex in C. Elegans

- Designed/cloned fusion gene plasmid and accompanying CRISPR/Cas9 guide RNAs for targeted tagging of gene of interest.
- Generated CRISPR/Cas9 transgenic lines of *C. Elegans* through microinjection.

SOFTWARE (HIGHLIGHTS)

Fasano-Franceschini Test - R Package

An open-source implementation of the Fasano and Franceschini test – a 2-D Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) two-sample test – used by 1600+ in the R community.

R Package Website: [\[Link\]](#)

TimeCycle - R Package

A non-parametric method that leverages results from dynamical systems theory and topology to test whether a dynamical variable (gene expression) exhibits cycling dynamics.

R Package Website: [\[Link\]](#) • **Video Tutorial:** [\[Link\]](#)

TimeTrial - R Shiny Web Application

An interactive software suite that enables circadian researchers to perform head-to-head comparisons of four leading cycle detection methods using both synthetic and biological data.

R Shiny Synthetic Data: [\[Link\]](#) • **R Shiny Biological Data:** [\[Link\]](#) • **Video Tutorial:** [\[Link\]](#)

Additional work can be found on my GitHub profile: [github/nesscoder](#)

TEACHING

Northwestern University – Searle Teaching Certificate Program

2020 – 2021

- Designed/developed an *Intro to Data Science Lab Course* complete with a course outline, sample lesson plan, sample assessments, grading scheme, evaluation plan, and interpretation of teaching effectiveness.

Northwestern University

What Do Your Data Say? (DataScience Bootcamp), Teaching Assistant

Spring 2020

IGP 486: Advanced Bioinformatics/Genomics, Teaching Assistant

Winter 2020

Collabrative Learning & Intergrated Mentoring in the BioSciences (CLIMB)

IGP 405: Cell Biology, Teaching Mentor

Winter 2021

IGP 484: Biostatistics, Teaching Mentor

Fall 2019, 2020

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

7.012: Introductory Biology, Teaching Assistant

Spring 2017

18.05: Introduction To Probability and Statistics, Teaching Assistant

Spring 2016

Department of Biology Tutoring Program, Tutor

2016–2017

Intro Biology, Experimental Biology and Communication, Genetics, Biochemistry, Cell Biology

PUBLICATIONS

- [1] **Ness-Cohn, Elan** and Rosemary Braun. TimeCycle: Topology Inspired MEthod for the Detection of Cycling Transcripts in Circadian Time-Series Data. *Bioinformatics*, jun 2021.
- [2] **Ness-Cohn, Elan**, Ravi Allada, and Rosemary Braun. Comment on “Circadian rhythms in the absence of the clock gene Bmal1”. *Science*, 372(6539), 2021.
- [3] **Ness-Cohn, Elan**, Marta Iwanaszko, William L Kath, Ravi Allada, and Rosemary Braun. TimeTrial: An interactive application for optimizing the design and analysis of transcriptomic times-series data in circadian biology research. *J Biol Rhythms*, 35:439–451, 2020.
- [4] Douglas J. Cattie, Claire E. Richardson, Kirthi C. Reddy, **Ness-Cohn, Elan**, Rita Droste, Mary K. Thompson, Wendy V. Gilbert, and Dennis H. Kim. Mutations in nonessential eIF3k and eIF3l genes confer lifespan extension and enhanced resistance to ER stress in *caenorhabditis elegans*. *PLoS Genetics*, 12(9):e1006326, 2016.
- [5] **Ness-Cohn, Elan** and Rosemary Braun. Fasano-Franceschini Test: an Implementation of a 2-Dimensional Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in R. *arXiv*, page 2106.10539, sept 2021 (**in review at The R Journal**).
- [6] **Ness-Cohn, Elan**, Dae-sung Hwangbo, William L Kath, Ravi Allada, and Rosemary Braun. TimeChange: Topology Inspired MEthod for the detection of differential cycling dynamics in circadian transcriptomic time-series data. *In Preparation*, 2021.