

The Optimist

A journal to help you survive the valley of shit



May 23

EDITORIAL

*Not long ago, we found ourselves at the pub the Optimist asking ourselves: why the hell did we ever decide to pursue a career in science? A few drinks in, we realized that we would not be doing relevant science if it was easy. Moreover, in any other job we would probably be bored. To be able to survive our PhD – in a healthy mental condition – we realized we had to change our mindset. We need to learn how to deal with failure, how to be patient and how to create a healthy work-life balance. In order to bring optimism back for ourselves and our fellow PhD students, we came up with the idea for this **interactive journal by PhD students for PhD students**. Our goal is to become healthy scientists that are hardworking but relaxed, ambitious but sharing, and confident but humble. We are convinced that the best way to achieve this is by sharing our struggles and by seeing the humor in it. But that is not enough. We believe the efficiency of science can be improved. The scientific method has proven very successful over the last decades. Nothing we write down here will change this. However, we would like to step away from the idea that the current way of doing science is the only way and encourage constructive discussions. Therefore, in every edition we will focus on a topic that merits some thought.*

The optimist team

Cover: Paula Longás

To be, or not to be.. on holiday? That is the question

Often a **PhD** comes along with a succession of countless **deadlines**. There is this conference coming up, don't forget to send in your abstract! Oh, you still have to perform some experiments to make the message stronger already? No worries – you still have two months left before submission closes. There is a reporting deadline for a grant in a month and you still have to do the final data analysis? And – just a quick reminder – you need to give your research seminar within the next four months and should try to finish writing your manuscript. We tend to tell ourselves that it will get better afterwards, but there will probably just be more deadlines coming up in the meantime.

Rest your mind

Due to this constant pile-up of work, **there never seems to be the right time to take time off**. We often work long hours during the week and even regularly add some weekends to our work schedule. But although the misconception that taking some days off will result in a less successful PhD project keeps persistently sticking around, there is a lot of data that says otherwise. Going on holiday has been associated with a beneficial effect on well-being, mental health, and even productivity [1,2] ! For this reason, in this edition of The Optimist **we want to stress that it is important to take holidays**. Despite our passion for

science, a PhD is also a job and, as in any other job, resting is an essential part of ensuring good performance. In the next paragraphs, we will give you some ideas on how you can make your next vacation happen and what the important things are to think of up front. In this way, you don't have to worry about anything - or at least barely anything because after all, we are scientists and know that things don't always go as planned.

When planning holidays, it is of course mandatory to stick to the rules, so you should know how many days in the year you are entitled to take off. This number can vary based on the contract you have,

if/how much you worked during the previous year, and also on the university you work for, so be sure to inform yourself before planning your holiday. It is also always useful to **keep an eye on the national holidays** or university-specific holidays as they may add to your days off (and can sometimes be nicely combined with your personal allowance to get a long weekend!). Before going to the actual planning, it is also helpful to decide for yourself if you prefer to have one big holiday or a few shorter ones. While short holidays are often not suited to travel far away, they can help you in breaking up your work year into smaller parts and making sure you have regular breaks to unwind. Considering we spend at least 4 years doing our PhD, it's of course also possible to alternate these patterns.

Combine holidays with conferences or workshops

While working in academia often allows very flexible and spontaneous work planning, timely planning of your holidays can really help to actually make them happen. As mentioned earlier, you will always be confronted with new deadlines and if you wait for a quiet time in the lab for taking your holidays – you will have to wait for an eternity. Discuss with your supervisor if there are any specific times of the year that they prefer you don't miss and you can plan around them. Make sure you are **aware of important conferences** in your field that you may be expected to go to – if they are taking place abroad, they can also be a **nice opportunity to combine them with some days off**.

After you made a plan for yourself, always make sure you discuss it with your supervisor. It allows them to know well in advance when they can not rely on you for any help or urgent last-

minute analyses and it saves you from any unpleasant surprises, such as an important meeting or conference falling in your holiday period that you just weren't aware of. Even communicating to your lab members when you will be gone can help everyone to better prepare for your absence.

At this point, you deserve a pat on the back – you made sure that you can take some time off to gather your strengths and thoughts for the next chapter in your PhD and that your research group is aware of it on time. You are now officially allowed to immerse yourself in the excitement of booking and planning your trip! Talking about excitement, having your holiday planned in advance can put you in a better mood because it gives you something to look forward to, which in turn might make you more productive. What you shouldn't do is think that in the weeks before your holiday you somehow need to make up for the time you will be gone and thereby give your stress-level an extra boost.

How to totally disconnect from work?

In order to be able to completely take your mind off work, there are a few things you can organize and set into place right before you leave. Because you might not

**Plan in
advance to
avoid any
stress**





think so, but while being on holiday you don't have to check your emails or even reply to them. If there are any (regular) meetings happening while you are on holiday, make sure that at least the organizers are aware of your absence. This way, you won't get any panic messages or calls at the time of the meeting or mad emails afterwards asking why you didn't show up. If you have any general lab duties that you need to take care of regularly, make sure that someone will fill in for you during your absence. Lastly, you should definitely **make use of the out-of-office automated reply on your mails**. Optimally, this mail should include the date of your return so people know the time frame of your absence as well as some "emergency contacts" for urgent

matters. Of course, make sure though that the emergency contacts are also aware of their status! :) These measures should allow you to have some peace of mind, knowing that everything you could foresee is taken care of and that your colleagues are prepared for your absence.

Give yourself some time to restart

Your amazing trip has come to an end. The hard reality kicks back in and you may feel even more stressed than when you departed. Unfortunately, there are actually several studies that show that our stress levels return to pre-vacation levels rather quickly [3,4]. However, as mentioned before, you should never feel like you have to make up for the time

that you were away. You are entitled to do so, and it doesn't mean you have to compensate for them by working extra. Try not to stress yourself by answering all your emails on the first day or get up to date on everything immediately. Instead, on **your first day back, get an overview of all of the issues/tasks** that came up while you were gone **and prioritize them**. By making a to-do list you can both force yourself to start with the more urgent tasks on top and incorporate the satisfying feeling of ticking things off that list. Remember you don't have to go through the whole list on the first day, you can for sure postpone the less important tasks for the coming day(s). You don't have to (and usually can't) be fully back on track on your first day. This is totally normal. You are not a robot. Actually, keep that holiday vibe a bit longer by going through your wonderful pictures during the evenings and dwelling a bit on the nice memories you made. Maybe tape a photo to your office wall or add a souvenir to your desk to keep the good vacation vibes around.

**We all
deserve and need
some days off**



Finally, once you are in full-work mode again – don't forget to already plan and look forward to your next holiday! Because to be honest, we all really deserve (and need) them.

References

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2. 2018 Project:Time Off (U.S. Travel Association)
3. Kühnel, Sonntag; Journal of Organizational Behavior; 2010
4. De Bloom, Geurts, Kompier; Journal of Happiness Studies; 2013

Doing a PhD in the stone age

For this edition's PI interview we turned to a different field of science and interviewed Prof. Dr. Henry Otgaar, a professor at the Institute of Criminology at KU Leuven and professor of Legal Psychology at Maastricht University. His research focuses on the development of memory illusions in both children and adults. In 2009 he completed his PhD at Maastricht University and continued his work there, additionally joining KUL as a research professor in 2018. As a visiting scholar and fellow he also collaborates with researchers from Indonesia and London, among others, to investigate precursors of false memories, adaptive memory, and delayed disclosure of sexual abuse. Additionally, Prof. Otgaar is often involved in legal cases as an expert witness on eyewitness testimonies as well as in the case of child witnesses.

How would you describe your experiences during the time of your PhD?

I had a wonderful time during my PhD. My supervisors provided me with much



academic freedom in the sense that I could completely delve in all the relevant literature and come up with my own ideas. Also, although there was much freedom, we had frequent lab meetings in which it was normal to receive critical feedback on ideas. The goal was to learn more and more and to improve as a scientist, it was and is important that everyone (PhD student, post doc, professor or whoever) feels full freedom to speak up and say what is needed.

Are there things you are specifically proud of, or things that you would approach differently in hindsight?

I am not a scholar who will quickly name

things of which I am proud of. I say that because I highly value team science. So perhaps it is better for me to say that as a member of our team, I am proud that we are doing a lot of interesting things in the area of legal psychology from an applied and fundamental perspective. For example, we succeed in conducting interesting projects, succeed in obtaining grants, and succeed in publishing interesting articles. I am proud that we can do this as a team.

If you would have to go back – would you still choose to do the same PhD?

Yes, I would certainly do :)

How many holidays did you take during your PhD and did you feel like it was enough?

That is a difficult one. I have much passion in my work and because of academic freedom, I can decide myself when I want to take holidays. I think this is also an important message for young scholars. It is great if you are passionate about your work, but there is more in life than science. So passion can go hand in hand with many other beautiful things in life. This is also important when thinking of

Science is great but it should not exert a mental toll on you that you are unable to work mentally and physically.

holidays. Make sure that you have enough time to do other (non-science) stuff and for example go on a holiday.

Do you have any PhD tips for us?

Strive for a healthy work-life balance. Science is great but it should not exert a mental toll on you so that you are unable to work mentally and physically. Create good teams of colleagues and make sure you have all the academic freedom needed to strive as a PhD student. This also means that no one can oblige you to do work more than you are paid for and that obtaining a healthy balance is key for a nice PhD journey.

PhD interview

Is there life after a PhD?

In this section, we interview former PhD students about the value of their PhD and which career moves they made later on.



This interview is a special one, be ready! We introduce you to [Donya Pakravan](#), our The Optimist founder with Joni Vanneste and Matthias Koch, back in 2019. She currently works as a strategy manager for Abcam in Cambridge, United Kingdom. Prior to taking on this position, which she has only been doing for a few weeks, she worked in London for a life science consulting company. She did her PhD at the Lab of Neurobiology at VIB KU Leuven, where she studied liquid-liquid phase separation and protein aggregation.

What did you enjoy the most during your PhD?

What I liked most during my PhD was the freedom I had in my lab for scientific exploration. It is more common to hear people complain about their PhD; however, I do consider myself lucky. Whilst **there were ups and downs**, I was

lucky to be part of a great lab and to have a PI that was hands-off. If I break this down year by year, in my first year, I really enjoyed learning without much/any pressure. I found my second year to be the most challenging, but that's because I was rather hard on myself. It's also usually the year you have to come to grips with your project turning out to be something different from what I originally planned :) In the third year, I finally started to see a story, and by year four, I was wrapping up side projects and coming to terms with the fact that not all of them would be completed.

I loved the freedom I had in my lab for scientific exploration

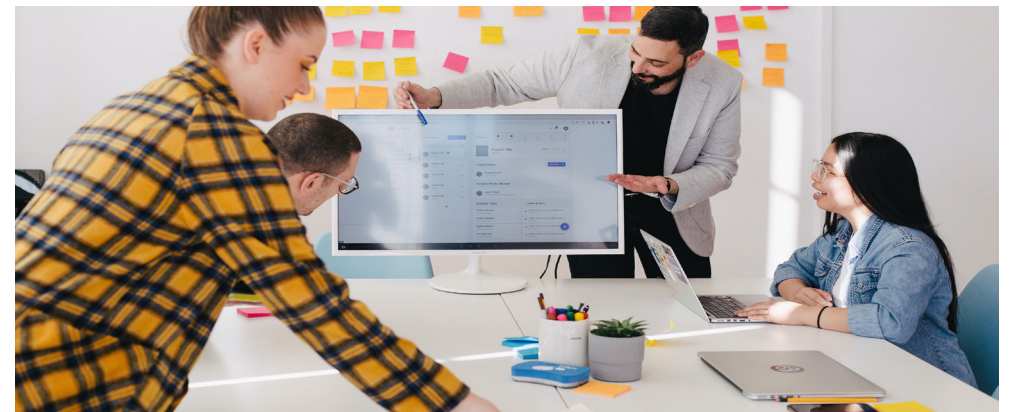
But **the friends which started off as colleagues, the conferences and the memories, will last a lifetime.**

Why did you decide to leave academia and go for your current job? Which steps did you have to take to achieve this? What is the biggest difference between industry and academia?

The first role I had after my PhD was a year in life science consulting. Why did I leave academia? I was too impatient to stay in academia. There are far greater scientists than me. But I love being close to science, reading papers, knowing about upcoming clinical trials, etc. I knew I wanted to stay close to science and be in a role where I could learn every day. That is why my current role is so exciting. I explore current and potential Abcam offerings and help

Consulting can be challenging, but it is dynamic and exciting!

shape our strategy by studying trends and analysing competitors. If you like finding holes in projects and filling them in with suggestions, then this is the job for you! Interviewing for consulting firms requires a lot of case study preparation; there are plenty of books on this. I spent a couple months practising case studies during the end of my PhD, which coincided with COVID. I also spoke to my friends who were in consulting. It can often be a shock when you join a consulting firm after a PhD because, **during a PhD, the client is you.** Consulting can be challenging; one minute we are working on a diagnostic case, and



the next we are looking at a rare disease case for another client. In consulting, we learn to tell a story to a commercial audience. In academia, we spend a long time on the introduction and methodologies; in consulting, we provide the solution and then tell you briefly how we got there.

What are your main responsibilities in your current job and how do you feel your PhD prepared you for this? Do you feel like the PhD has an added value?

My PhD absolutely prepared me for my current role. The PhD is a big bonus when you want to have a relatively senior role within pharmaceutical/life science strategy consulting. I would say it comes in handy every day for my job. The pathway to commercial insights/strategy management positions is accelerated with a PhD, and you have the option of consulting, venture capital, and pharma at your disposal. **Outside the realm of technical learning are soft skills, which are equally important but often neglected.** Learning to work within a team, paying attention to detail, time management, project management, perseverance, public speaking, sharing successes as a team and setbacks are equally critical.

What would you give as advice to PhD students?

My first tip is to **treat your PhD like a trainingship**. Like other aspects in life, the more you put in, the more you will benefit from it. The VIB and KU Leuven have excellent courses for free. It is easy to get tunnel vision and not "have time" to attend these sorts of things. My second tip is to not take your bad data personally. This is a natural part of the job because you breathe, live, and sleep research during this densely packed time. But it is okay to step away from it. Sometimes experiments fail. That is a natural part of the job. Third is to truly take it all in. Before you know it, it will be over, and I only hope it's some of the best few years of your life. And my last tip is don't compare! Some people will be lucky with a project; some students have a postdoc spoon-feeding them throughout their entire PhD. But you'll always learn more by being independent. They say there is a PhD Holy Trinity: The PI, the Lab and the

Having a PhD is a big bonus in pharmaceutical/life science consulting

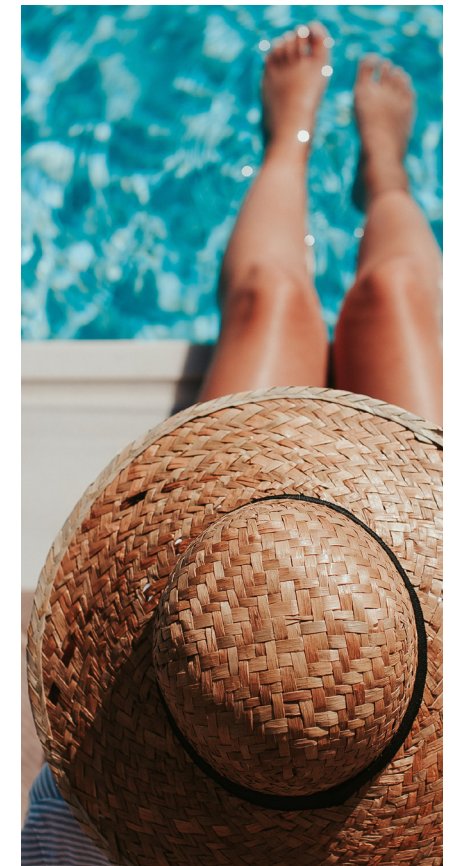
Topic. Prospective PhD students spend way too much time thinking about the project they want to work on, and not enough time evaluating the lab and PI. But ask anyone who finished their PhD, and they'll tell you that your lab colleagues and supervisor are actually more important for your general happiness and give you the drive to go to work every morning.

In this edition we're discussing the taboo around taking holidays during your PhD. How do you feel about this and do you have any advice for people struggling with taking time off?

Again, I consider myself lucky, as that was just not the work culture in my lab. I did some of my best travelling whilst I was a PhD student (pre-pandemic). I can't say that this is the case throughout all of academia, but I think it is important to set the tone and push back for what is within your rights. **There will always be people who judge you for leaving early or taking your rightful holidays now, or later at your next job.** My advice is don't listen to them, get on with your work and - relax, which is as important. The taboo is only as big as the power you let it hold. I think COVID has taught us all that there is no black/white way of working. That working culture can

There is no reward for being burnt-out, just additional time wasted

be fluid and people have different strengths. There is no reward for being burnt-out, just additional time wasted. If you treat your PhD like a marathon, you'll pace yourself better.



Mindfulness meditation to have a mindful research life

As scientists, our minds are always occupied with a never-ending cycle of experiments, projects, and papers. From the ones that have been done, to the ones currently in progress, to those still waiting... We are forever immersed in a cycle of testing, questioning, and discovery. Sometimes it becomes hard to think about anything else. We also face other hurdles, such as securing funding, maybe doing research as expat scientists, and dealing with the expectations of our peers and ourselves. These external and internal factors can lead to stress and negative self-talk, causing us to lose sight of our goals and aspirations.

In this edition of The Optimist, we introduce, for the first time, the “**Mindfulness**” section as a source of introspection. *We aim to provide researchers with the tools to quiet their minds and focus on their inner selves to navigate the negative voices that may hinder their progress and undermine their confidence.* We will guide you through a “5 minutes of mindfulness meditation”. You can practice just after waking up, before sleeping, and even while waiting for an experiment that allows you some breathing time. With constant daily practice -like right now you are a pipetting guru- you will become a mindfulness guru.



Take a deep breath... Read first, then start practicing. You will ace it as always.

- 1.** To begin with, sit or lie down in a comfortable place for yourself. Keep your hands in a relaxed position. In the next five minutes, be sure that you won't be distracted.
- 2.** Put a smile on your face! It must have been a long day or you have a long day ahead.
- 3.** Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths... Inhale and exhale through your nose. Be aware of your environment. Feel any sensation that comes to you. Maybe a sound coming to your nose, a smell, or a touch?
- 4.** Take a few seconds to immerse your existence in the place of meditation. *How do you*

feel now? How was your day today? How is your tiredness level? What thoughts are circulating in your mind?

- 5.** Let go of everything now!
- 6.** Gently, try to address any tension in your body. Feel your muscles unwind and your mind starts to quiet with every breath you take.
- 7.** Take a reference point on your face. Plant your focus on any area you feel more comfortable with.
- 8.** Feel every moment of your breath! What a nice feeling! Your chest expands, every breath rejuvenates your mind and you feel more at ease in your breaths.
- 9.** Whenever your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- 10.** Begin to notice any thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations that arise. Observe them without judgment, and then let them go while bringing your attention back to your breath. *Remember, these stimuli are like a cloud passing by in the sky. They will just pass by if you don't hold on to them. Be an observer, not a chaser.*
- 11.** As you let go of these worries, you feel a sense of calm and peacefulness wash over you. Take a few deep breaths and allow



yourself to immerse yourself in this moment of tranquility.

- 12.** Feel your body and mind relaxing and letting go of all the stress and tension that has been weighing you down.
- 13.** Continue to focus on your breath, allowing yourself to be fully present.
- 14.** When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to savor the feeling of relaxation and inner peace that you have cultivated through this meditation.

Think of this meditation as a protocol you follow.

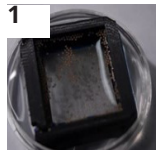
The first couple of times you may need to read it step-by-step, you may get confused or distracted. However, you will finally reach a state in which you remember by heart. The point of this meditation is not to be able to clear your mind completely, but it is to become more aware of your thoughts and emotions as they arise and to observe rather than judge them. With regular practice, you will feel more grounded and centered. Even in the midst of chaos and stress, you will become naturally mindful.

Scienceterrific news

We all know how depressing reading the news can get, especially if you are already having a tough time at work. But do not despair! We've navigated through all that negativity to come up with a selection of articles that are guaranteed to lift your spirits!

Scientists find new technique for freezing and storing coral larvae to protect Great Barrier Reef diversity

Coral reefs are one of the world's most biologically diverse, complex, and valuable ecosystems. Despite occupying only 0.2% of the ocean's surface area, they are home to one-third of all sea life. Fish and other organisms seek shelter, eat, reproduce, and raise their young. Interestingly, corals and algae have a symbiotic relationship. Algae live inside corals, which are made of calcium carbonate and provide a good shelter. Algae



1. Coral larvae on cryomesh [1]
2. Great Barrier reef in Australia [2]
3. Coral bleaching [3]



provide their host with food produced through photosynthesis in exchange for protection. To achieve a good symbiotic relationship, the surrounding water temperature is critical, as algae are sensitive to warm water. This is known as "coral bleaching," and it occurs when the algae that normally provide the vibrant colors are forced out of the corals. Because every day 30 million tons of carbon dioxide is poured into the ocean, the ocean is becoming too warm and acidic for the organisms to live there. The most important thing we can do to help the reef is to reduce global temperatures. However, scientists have been investigating various methods for preserving and restoring coral populations.

For the past years coral sperm has been successfully cryopreserved, however, using frozen sperm for reproduction necessitates the availability of fresh oocytes, which are only available for a few days each year. Some of these issues could be avoided if coral embryos or larvae were cryopreserved. A team from the University of Minnesota's College of Science and Engineering successfully tested a new method for freezing and storing coral larvae so that they can be reintroduced into the wild. They used cryomesh to help store coral larvae at -196°C (-320.8°F) and thaw them very quickly and cheaply. This simple technology will allow them to preserve the current genetic diversity so that in the future we can use it much like a seed bank that has been developed for crop species.

Scientists Create Mice Oocytes from Two Male Parents (Two Boys One Egg?)

In a ground-breaking new study published in Nature, researchers were able to create mice from two biologically male parents [4]. In vitro gametogenesis is usually done using female-derived stem cells, but in this study, the team of Kato & Hayashi at Kyushu University in Japan tried a new approach using male-derived stem cells instead.

To start, the scientists transformed male embryonic stem cells (XY) into female ones (XD) by passing the cells to make them lose their Y chromosome. They then duplicated the X chromosome to produce an euploid embryonic stem cell with two X's (XX). Next, to test if sex-converted oocytes can give rise to offspring, they took pluripotent stem cells (PS) derived from the fibroblasts of male mice, converted their XY chromosomes to XX, and differentiated them into oocytes. The oocytes were fertilized by wild-type sperm using in vitro fertilization, giving rise to viable embryos. The embryos were implanted into female



mice - of which 1.1% (7 out of 630) gave birth to healthy pups. Kato & Hayashi's team showed that sex-converted PS cells (XX) can differentiate into functional oocytes and give rise to healthy bi-paternal offspring. By conferring two X chromosomes into XΔ PS cells, they overcame the infertility that comes with having only one X chromosome, but with a potential downside that oocytes may have an increased risk of X-linked mutations. All in all, their method provides a unique tool for studying the function of chromosomes in oogenesis and potentially cure infertility due to sex chromosome or autosomal disorders. They also opened up the exciting prospect of same-sex couples eventually having biological children - but translating this technique from mouse to humans still has a long way to go.



Sources

1. <https://www.climatefoundation.org/>
- 2,3. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/coral-reefs/>
4. Murakami, K., Hamazaki, N., Hamada, N. et al. Generation of functional oocytes from male mice in vitro. Nature 615, 900–906 (2023).



HEY IT'S OKAY TO...

Science is serious business, but we may share similar frustrations



...take some time off to find your inner equilibrium

...go for a quick walk in the middle of the day

...skip the lab if you having a bad day

...celebrate even small achievements with your beloved ones

...say "no" when you are overwhelmed, even to your supervisor!

...go home early, when you are mentally tired and cannot concentrate

...seek professional help for your mental balance

...use ChatGTP to find out what is wrong with the code you have written

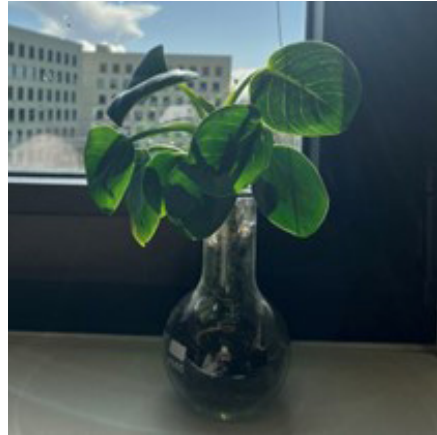
...go to a meeting with your PI with no new data (again)

...talk about failed experiments

Does your desk look boring? Are you tired of staring at the same blank wall and dusty surface every day? Do you want to upstage the beautiful decorations and thriving plants of your desk neighbor?

Make yourself your very own **Flask Plant!**

The Flask Plant is a simple and inexpensive way to make your desk come to life and stand out. Not only are houseplants scientifically proven to boost mental health and happiness, but it's a great way to make you look and feel like a pro scientist. It says to the world 'hey, I'm a scientist, but I also have style. And I don't kill my plants like I killed my cell culture last week'. Best part of all, the flasks are completely free of charge (because you steal them from your lab, of course).



How to make a Flask Plant

1. Get yourself a tiny plant or propagate one by cutting a leaf or stem. Some easy plants to propagate are Pothos, Philodendron, and Snake Plants.
2. Grab your flask or beaker of choice and fill it with soil using a spoon or funnel.
3. Use a pencil to make a hole in the soil and gently place your plant or cutting in the hole. You may need the help of some forceps if you're using a conical flask.
4. Don't forget to give it some sun and water it every now and then (otherwise repeat steps 1-3).



Artichokes lasagna

Hello, Spring! Yes guys, even though the weather doesn't seem very gentle this 2023, the Spring season is here! And what better way to celebrate than with a very tasty lasagna recipe featuring seasonal ingredients? I am from Milan, Italy, and artichokes are very popular during the spring season. So, instead of the classical pizza recipe that you might expect from a proud Italian, here's a veggie lasagna recipe that I am sure you will love! Enjoy!

And you? What are your traditional Spring dishes?

Ingredients for the filling

- 250 gr lasagna sheets
- 5 artichokes
- 200 gr taleggio
- 250 gr grated parmesan cheese
- 1 glass of white wine
- Oil, salt, and pepper to taste
- 1 lemon and water

Ingredients for the besciamella

- 1L whole milk
- 80 gr all-purpose flour
- 100 gr butter
- Salt and nutmeg to taste



Preparation

1. Artichokes.

- Start by cleaning the artichokes (1): shorten the stem and peel it.
- Remove the outer leaves and the thorns. Cut the tip of the artichoke about 3 cm in a 'spiral' way to remove the leaf ends, which are the most bitter parts.
- After that, cut the artichokes in quarters and remove the internal 'fluffy spines' within the center of them, which are inedible (2).
- Once cut, place them in a bowl with some water, and the lemons cut in half so they do not oxidize and turn brown (3).
- Take a large frying pan and add some oil to warm up. Add the artichokes, previously drained, and saute them for a couple of minutes. Then add a glass



Chef's corner



of white wine and keep them cooking at medium heat. Once the alcohol evaporates, cover them and let them cook for another 10min. Add salt and pepper to taste and in case they dry too much, add half a glass of water.

- Once the artichokes are completely cooked, mince them coarsely (6). Mince also the taleggio in small pieces.

2. Besciamella.

While the artichokes are cooking, prepare the besciamella (4).

- In a large pot, pour the whole milk and add some salt and nutmeg to taste.

- Add the flour and the butter and, with a whisk, start stirring (5). Continue stirring until it thickens.

3. Lasagna.

Once the besciamella and the artichokes are ready, you can start assembling your lasagna! (7)

- Cover the bottom of an oven dish with some besciamella (8) then place the first layer of lasagna sheets.

-Place another spoonful of besciamella (9) and cover it with artichokes (10).

-Add a few pieces of taleggio (11), and an abundant amount of grated cheese (12). Then place a new layer of lasagna sheets and continue like this for a total of 4 or 5 layers (depending on your oven dish or until you finish all the ingredients). Be sure to place an abundant layer of grated cheese on top together with the taleggio so that they will create a very appetizing cheese crust on top (13).

-Cook in a preheated static oven at 180°C for 45min (the crust should be evenly browned) and then serve when still hot! (14)



**Your lasagna is ready:
enjoy!**

PhD Society events

If you are doing a PhD or postdoc in Leuven, you may have come across the PhD Society group. This group is made by researchers for researchers, who regularly organize amazing events mostly in Leuven to encourage socialization, new friendships, and of course to have a lot of fun and beautiful memories! If you are feeling exhausted by your work and you just want to chill for a while, their events are exactly what you are looking for: movie nights, pub quiz, afterwork drinks, beach volley matches, and so on.. We, as The Optimist Team, share their same ultimate goal and for this reason, we are more than happy report below the PhD Society calendar for the next months. While you decide which activity fits you the most, you can also enjoy our crossword here below. Have fun!

The optimist

A	D	C	H	O	Y	S	O	C	I	E	T	Y	J
M	S	E	K	O	H	C	I	T	R	A	A	T	O
Y	I	E	J	D	D	I	Y	T	X	S	Y	I	U
M	I	N	D	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	L	S	R
D	E	A	S	N	T	I	C	K	E	T	S	R	N
U	O	S	L	H	C	G	A	L	A	H	L	E	A
D	P	C	T	S	I	M	I	T	P	O	I	V	L
A	A	I	T	D	I	N	A	M	L	L	O	I	O
T	N	N	K	O	P	A	E	C	E	I	C	N	R
P	H	D	C	A	R	C	D	T	T	D	O	U	E
K	E	I	C	E	S	A	U	S	O	A	R	O	L
N	L	E	U	V	E	N	T	D	D	Y	X	T	A
H	C	R	A	E	S	E	R	E	L	S	N	V	X
O	I	T	H	C	I	L	O	H	A	K	R	O	W

TICKETS
HOLIDAYS
MINDFULNESS
ENJOY
DOCTORATE
RESEARCH
WORKAHOLIC
LEUVEN
JOURNAL
PHD
DANCE
OPTIMIST
GALA
UNIVERSITY
ARTICHOKES
DIY
SHINE
RELAX
SOCIETY

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/5502011/>

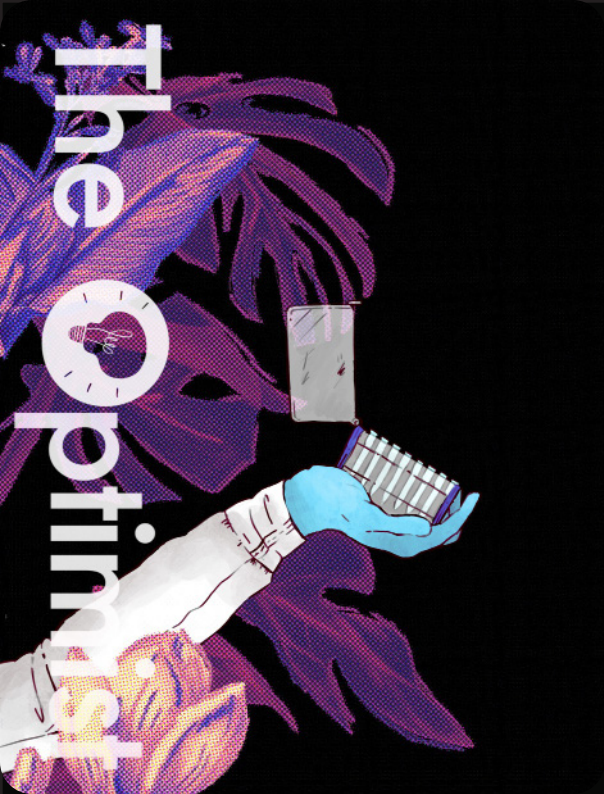
JUNE 2023						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
PhD SOCIETY			1	2	3	4
5 MOVIE NIGHT	6 PIZZA NIGHT	7 PIZZA NIGHT	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 MOVIE NIGHT	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
NOTES: More events to be planned!						



For more info and updates on the upcoming/new events, keep an eye on

- Website: <https://phdsociety.be/>
- Instagram: [phdsociety_leuven](https://www.instagram.com/phdsociety_leuven)
- Facebook: [PhD Society Leuven](https://www.facebook.com/PhD Society Leuven)





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Main topic

Julika Neumann

Doing a PhD in the stone age

Julika Neumann

Is there life after a PhD

Silke Vanderhaeghe

Mindfulness meditation

Ayşe Köse

Sciencerrific news

Hannah Bertels & Alina Soto

DIY & Tricks/Life Hacks

Alina Soto

PhD survival tips

Miriam Seiti & Ayşe Köse

Chef's corner

Matilde Contardo

PhD Society events

Matilde Contardo

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Paula Longás

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