

Mario De Bono PhD

Research Group Leader
MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology
University of Cambridge
Special Interest: Behaviour and
neurology of nematodes – studying
neural networks.



Personal Profile

Mario De Bono is the youngest of three children, his older brother and sister both being medical doctors who work in the UK. He lived with his parents in Birzebbuga, by the sea but spent a lot of time with his grandparents in Siggiewi too, in the countryside. Following secondary schooling in Malta, he attended Glasgow University (as did his brother Johan) graduating top of his class. He was awarded a scholarship and attended Cambridge University where he read for his PhD.



After this, he accepted a post-doctoral position at the University of California, San Francisco, before once again returning to Cambridge in his present position.

He is married and has recently become the proud father of twins aged about 1 year.

Mario feels that his secondary school teachers were very important in encouraging him to pursue science. One of his favourite expressions is the maltese one “Ahseb fil-hazin halli t-tajjeb ma jonqosx” roughly translated as “think of what could go wrong so things will always go right”.

He once convincingly told a friend words to the effect of “ on the day you die, it will not be your publications which make you happy, but your family and friends”.

This is not an attitude of complacency or laissez-faire as Mario has published extensively in the best scientific journals in the world including Nature, Nature Genetics, Nature Neuroscience and Cell (some of which he also provided the cover story for).

Mario was a great sport during filming of the X-lab series and impressed most of the crew with his easy going attitude and friendliness and the fact that he is more fluent in the Maltese language than many people who live in Malta perpetually.

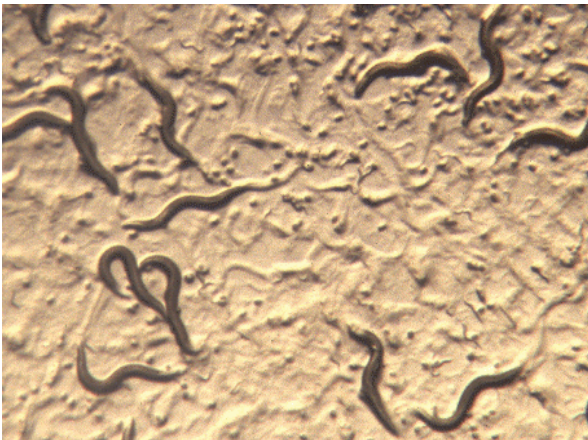
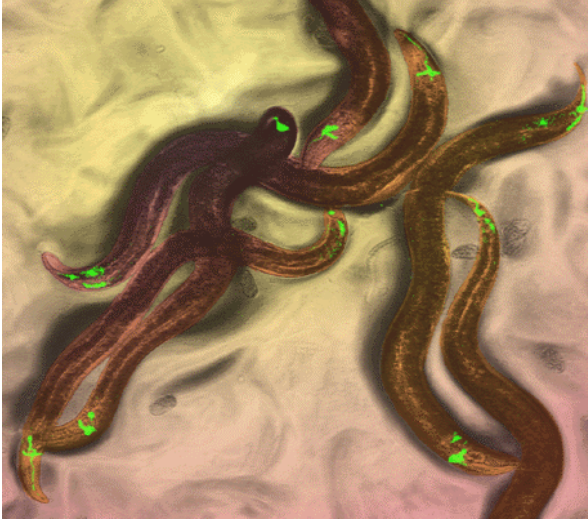


Mario’s hobbies include sailing, punting and swimming – most things to do with the water.

He also enjoys cooking as well as human behaviour and history.

Research Profile

Mario’s present research interests include how neural networks are assembled, function and evolve.



C. elegans (a microscopic nematode worm) is a powerful system to study neural circuits. The worm has exactly 302 neurons each of which can be identified. By combining genetics, molecular and cell biology, and neural imaging one can dissect how these circuits work. Foraging (feeding) strategies vary across natural worm populations, providing an opportunity also to investigate how neural circuits and behaviour evolve. Conservation in neural signalling means our results are often generally applicable to other animals, including mammals.

Relevant Links or info

Anyone who would like to find out more about Mario's research can look into the following site <http://www.neuroscience.cam.ac.uk/directory/profile.php?debono>

Other websites relating to Mario's work and that of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge include

<http://www2.lmb.internal/home.nclk>

http://www2.lmb.internal/CB/de_Bono_M/

<http://www2.mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk/groups/debono/>