

# Importance of the Elevator Pitch & Introduction to the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT)



Professional Development Workshop  
College of Graduate Health Sciences  
UTHSC  
October 3, 2019

# What is an Elevator Pitch?

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- A brief answer to the question “What do you do?”
  - A commercial about you!
  - To convey the topic in a brief and exciting way
- Two forms:
  - One liner
  - 30-60 second speech
- Meant to grab someone’s attention so they want to learn more



# Why is it Important?

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- A simple way to make connections
  - Leave someone with a good impression
- A way to communicate the **value** of your work

# Components of an Elevator Pitch

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- Introduction
  - *“I am \_\_\_\_\_ and I study \_\_\_\_\_.”*
- State the major question/gap in knowledge
- Why it matters
  - *“Knowing more about this can help us \_\_\_\_\_.”*
- How you are answering the question
- What you have found / what’s next
  - *“So far we have found that \_\_\_\_\_. We can use this knowledge to \_\_\_\_\_.”*

# Components of an Elevator Pitch

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## Introduction

- My name is Stephanie, I'm a graduate student at UTHSC, and I study how experience changes the way different types of information are coded in the brain.

## Specific Question

- Specifically, I am interested in a brain region that codes for many kinds of information, such as taste and pain. We know that experience can change the way the brain encodes information, but previous work in this brain region usually focuses on one type of stimulus. No one has investigated how experience might change the way this brain region responds to and integrates multiple kinds of information.

## Impact

- Understanding how information is integrated may help us better understand how the brain encodes experiences to generate behavior.

## How/Methods

- My work is interesting because I am using a novel miniaturized microscope to study brain activity while animals are awake and behaving.

## Findings and Future Directions

- So far we have found that different types of experience cause vastly different changes in how the brain encodes information. We are currently testing how these experiences effect the processing of multiple kinds of inputs, such as fear, novelty, and pain.



# Preparing an Elevator Pitch

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- Pay attention to your audience
- Avoid technical jargon
- Don't overdo it
- Practice!

# Implementing the Elevator Pitch: UTHSC 3 Minute Thesis Competition

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- The 3MT® is a competition between PhD scholars to convey a research topic in a succinct and layman terms so that a nontechnical person can easily understand the idea.
- Students will have to present their research topic and its importance in a compelling manner within the 3-minute window.



# History of the 3MT

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- **2008:** The first 3MT competition at the University of Queensland, Australia with 160 participants
- **2009 - 2010:** The 3MT promoted to other Australian and New Zealand universities
- **2016:** First Asia-Pacific 3MT held and hosted annually at the University of Queensland, sponsored by,

**SPRINGER**  
**NATURE**

- **2015:** First 3MT competition at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, TN

# Purpose

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***Skills development:*** The goal is to be able to explain the research work effectively to the audience. 3MT helps in developing communication, and presentation skills

***Interdisciplinary interaction:*** Students from different departments come together and get to know one another and talk about their research

***On and beyond:*** 3MT winners may go on to represent their university at national and international 3MT competitions which provides an excellent networking and professional development opportunity

# Rules

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- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted. No slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are allowed.
- No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted. No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.
- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).
- Presentations are to commence from the stage.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

# Judging criteria

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## Comprehension & Content

- Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background and significance to the research question being addressed while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon?
- Did the presentation clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- Did the presenter spend adequate time on each element of their presentation - or did they elaborate for too long on one aspect or was the presentation rushed?

# Judging criteria

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## Engagement & Communication

- Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
- Was the presenter careful not to trivialise or generalise their research?
- Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
- Did the presenter capture and maintain their audience's attention?
- Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?
- Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?

# 3MT Prizes

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## UTHSC Final

Winner: \$200 cash prize

Runner-up: \$100 cash prize

People's choice: \$100 cash prize



## Winner goes to Regional Competition

# 2018 3MT Winners to Share 3MT

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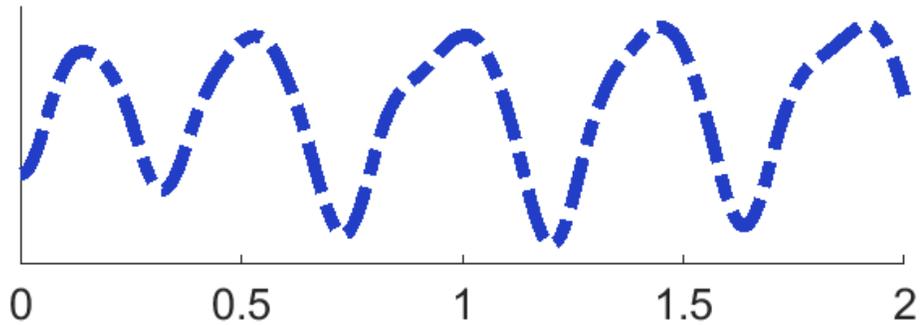
- Angela Taylor – 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner
- Sanjana Haque – People's Choice Winner



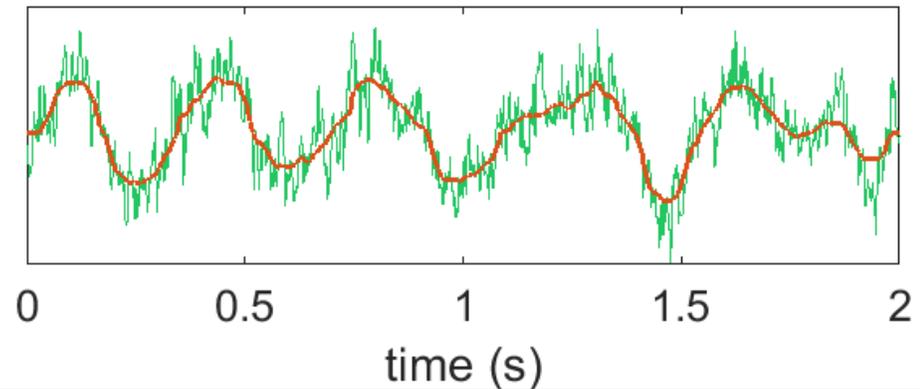
# Rhythms of the Brain



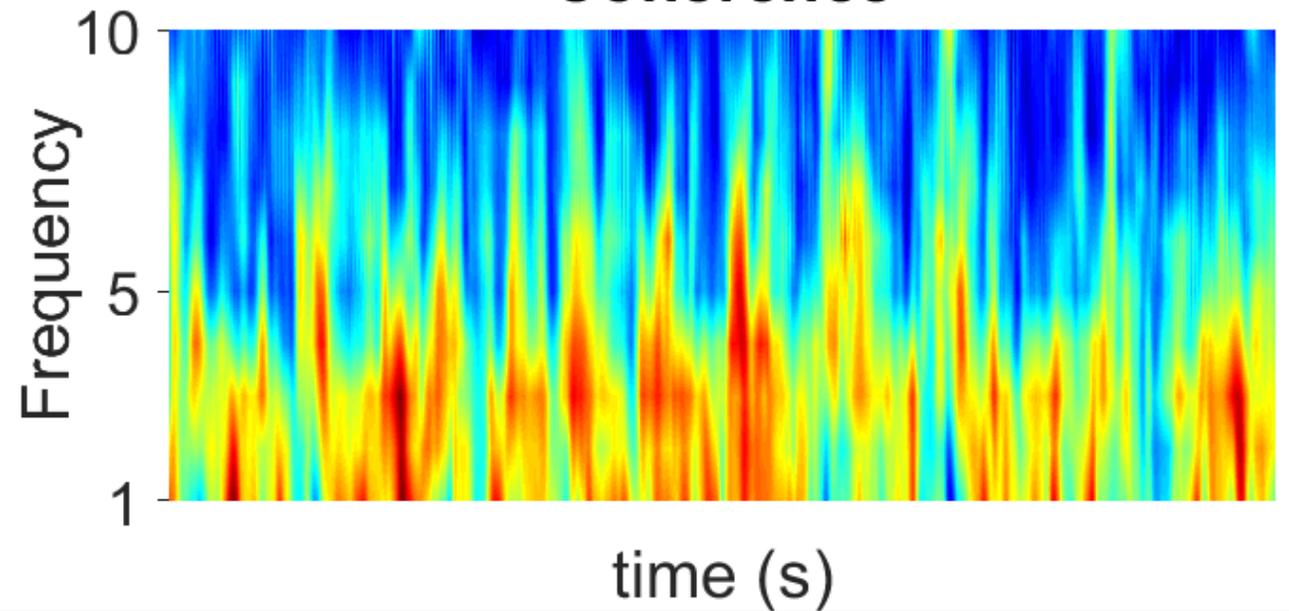
### Respiration



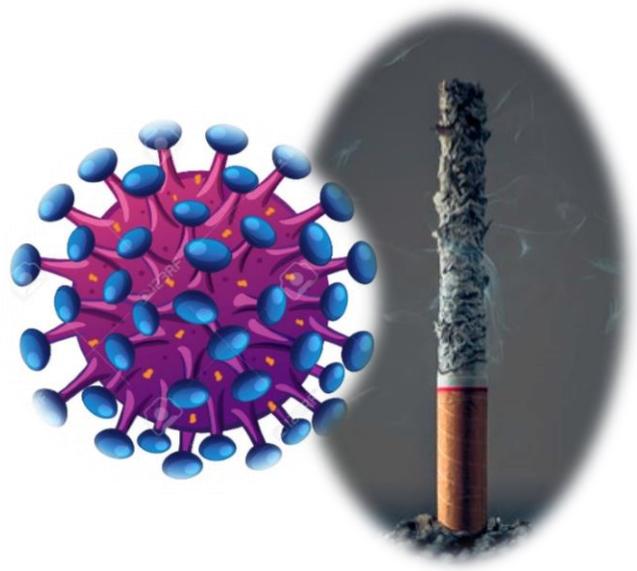
### Prefrontal Cortex



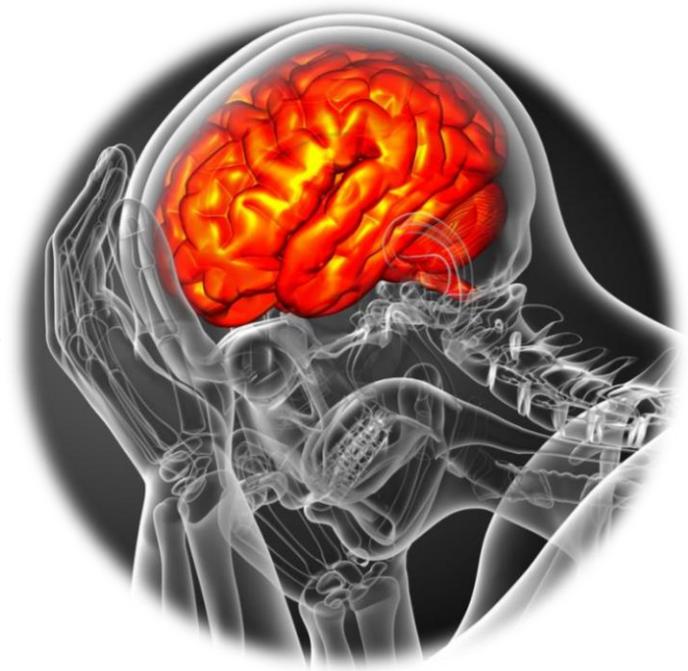
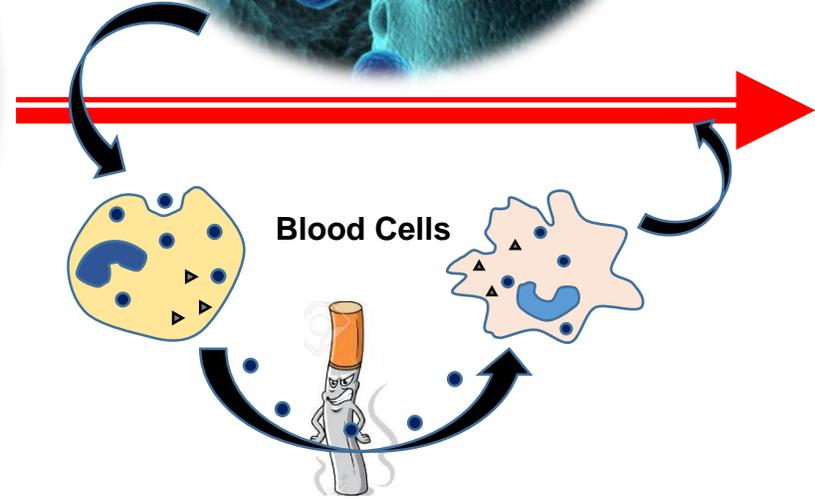
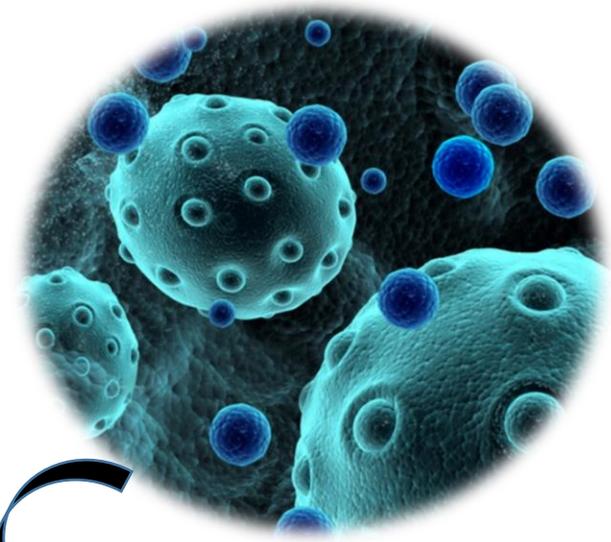
### Coherence



# Exosome



**HIV + Tobacco**



**Neuronal disorders**

# 2019 3MT Competition Dates

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- **3MT Practice Workshop:**
  - Thursday, Oct 17, 2019 at 5:30pm in Link Auditorium
  
- **3MT Preliminary/Practice Round:**
  - Friday, Nov 1, 2019 at 5:30pm in Link Auditorium
  
- **3MT Final Competition:**
  - Friday, Nov 15, 2019 at 5:30pm in Freeman Auditorium

# Questions?

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