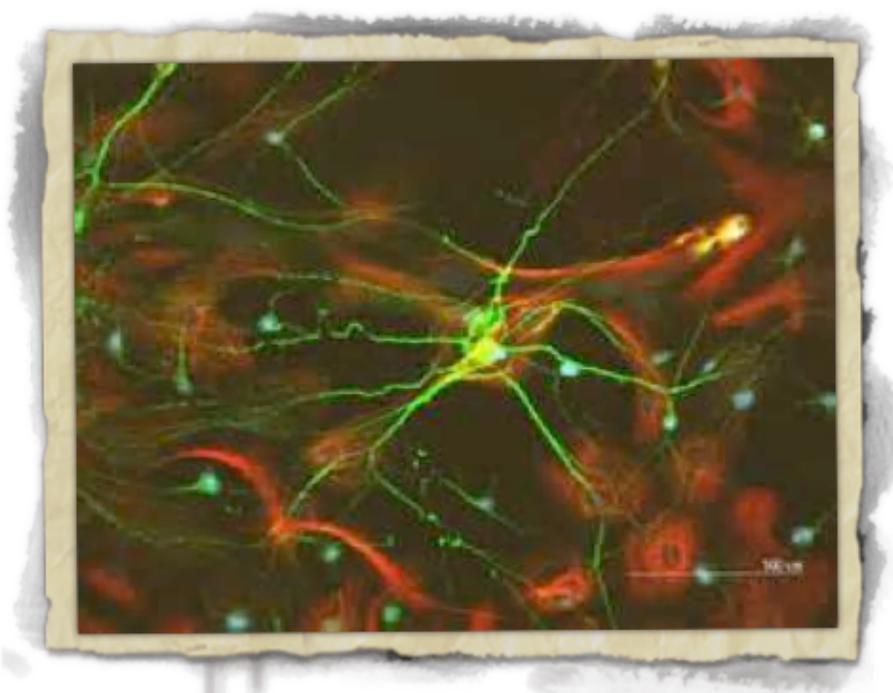


BRAIN CELLS

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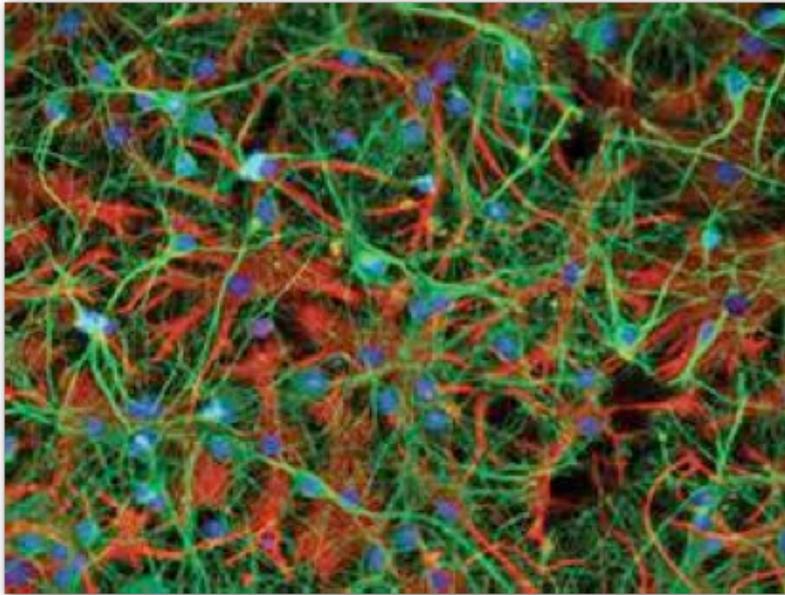
February 21, 2013

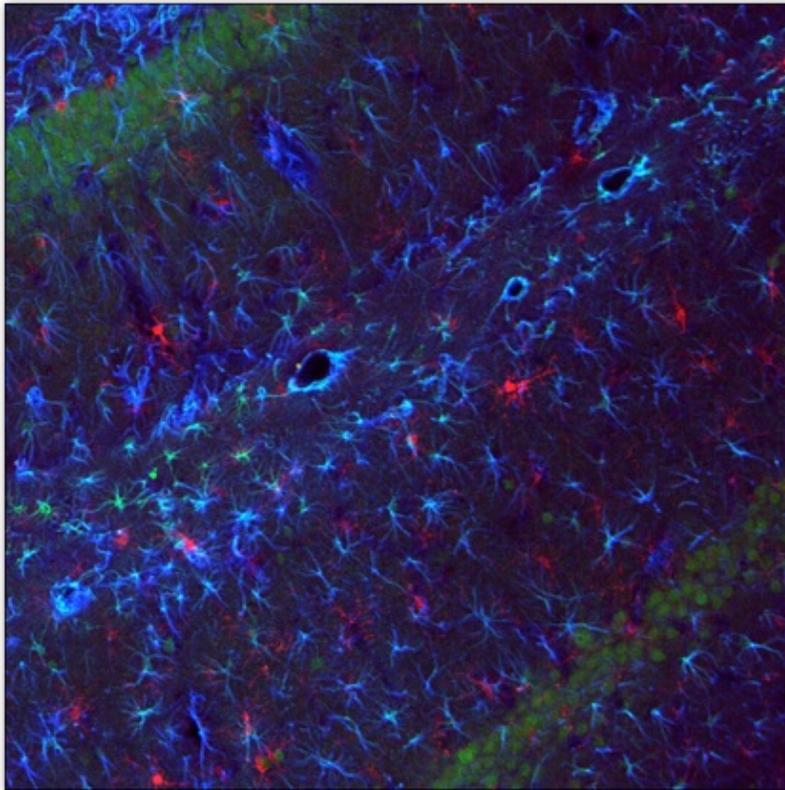
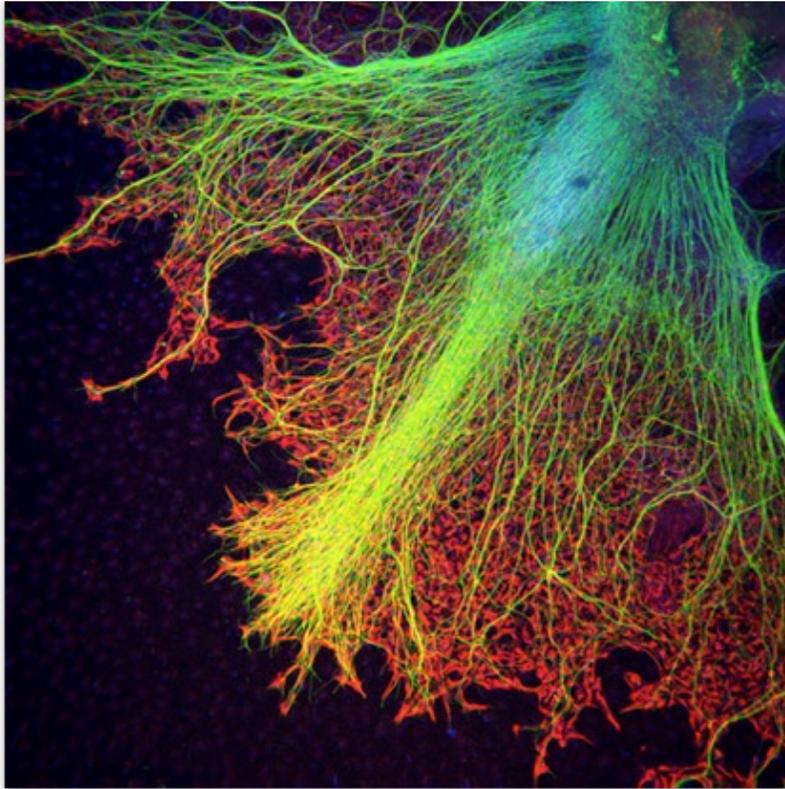
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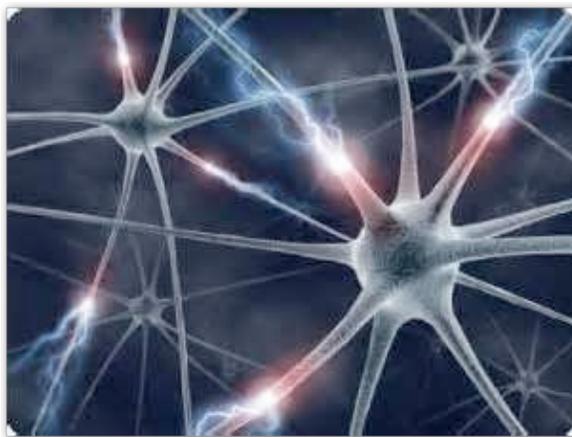
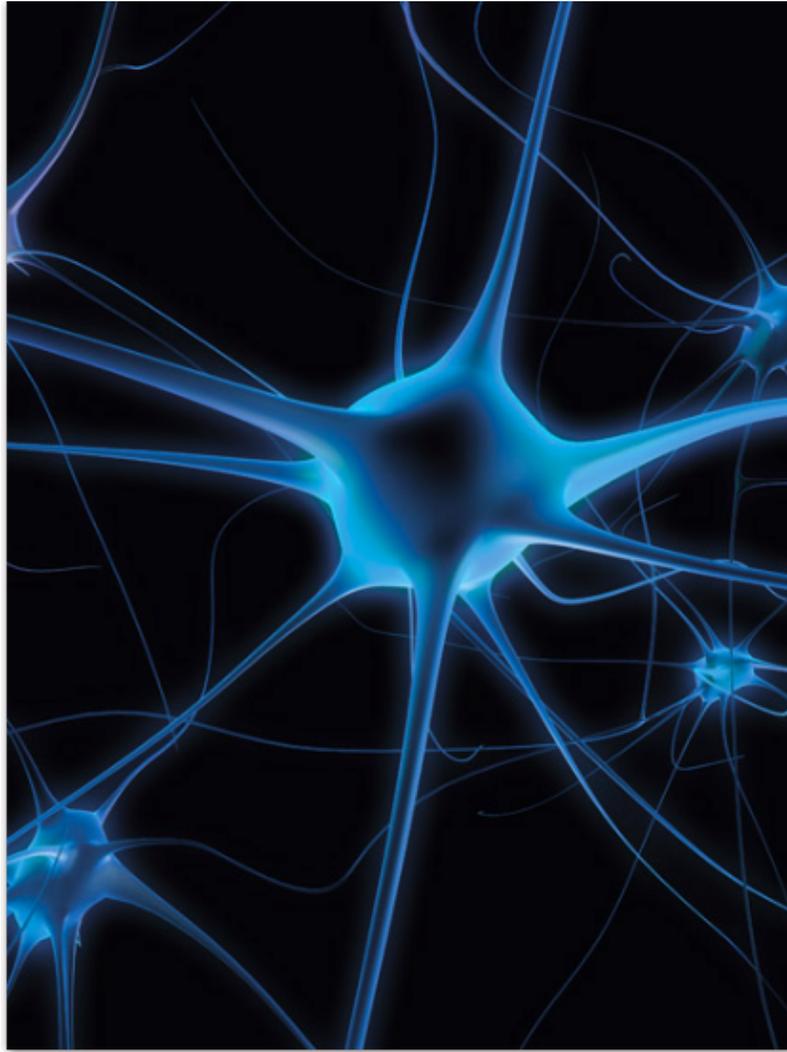
aspects of brain signaling, such as neural network electrical activity and signal transfer by synapses. In the course of their research, they discovered that astrocytes actually take an active role in the way these signals are distributed, confirming theories put forth by leading experimental scientists.

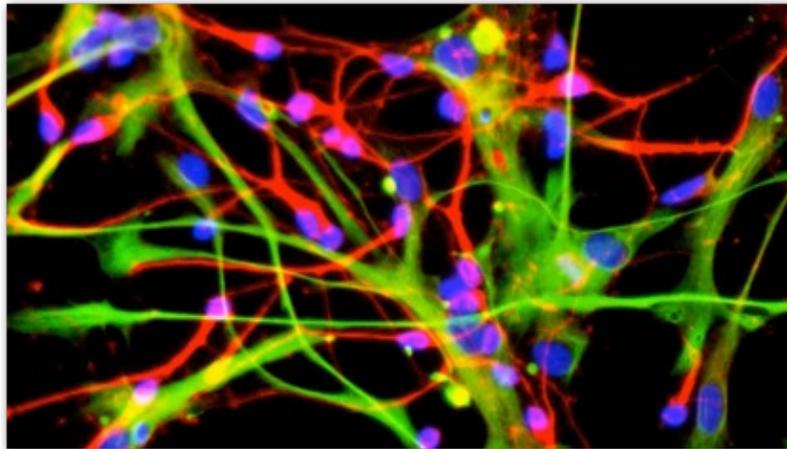
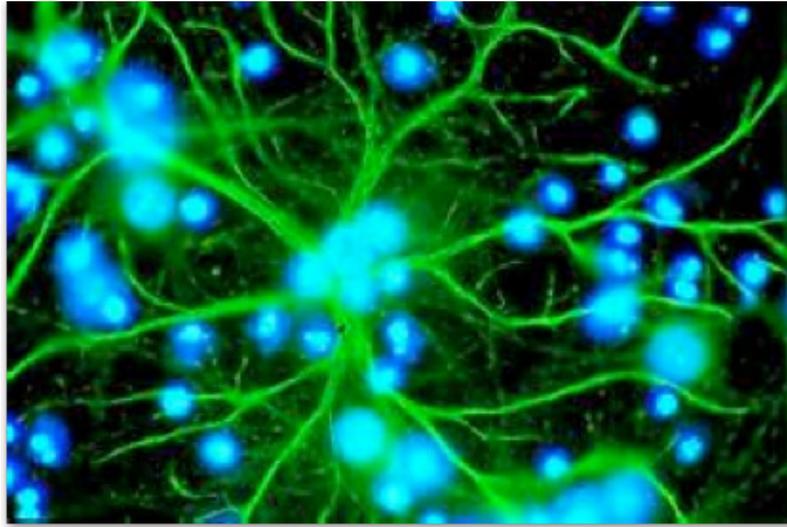
Astrocytes form additional networks to those of the neurons and synapses, operating simultaneously to coordinate information from different regions of the brain -- much like an electrical motherboard functions in a computer, or a conductor ensuring that the entire

orchestra is working in harmony, explains De Pittà. These findings should encourage neuroscientists to think beyond neuron-based networks and adopt a more holistic view of the brain, he suggests, noting that the two communication systems are actually interconnected, and the breakdown of one can certainly impact the other. And what may seem like damage in one small area could actually be carried to larger regions. In the case of epilepsy, for example, the networks frequently become overexcited.









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