

FEATURES, SPECIAL REPORT SUBARTICLE

Quotes of the year

BY SPECTRUM

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“There’s still a hole in the ceiling where I bumped my head when I jumped for joy.”

Eric Courchesne, University of California, San Diego, on his elation at finding a possible **molecular signature for autism**.

“When we have this process that’s really convoluted and complicated, it’s always the families with the least privilege who don’t make it through.”

Katharine Zuckerman, Oregon Health and Science University, on the **challenges of getting an autism diagnosis** and treatment in the United States.

“If they find something that fits their argument, they emphasize it and make a point about it, and if they find something that doesn’t fit their argument, they tend to put it aside.”

Arthur Beaudet, Baylor College of Medicine, on researchers’ **tendency to pick and choose** what to include in a study.

“That's pretty good evidence — when you poke it and it jumps, and you keep poking it and it jumps higher — that you're on to a causal relationship.”

Joy Hirsch, Yale University, on her team's findings that direct **eye contact activates a region** of the social brain.

“Until we attend to the full diversity of autistic traits in confluence with gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity, race, class, we will continue to miss people, and they will continue to feel lost.”

Rua M. Williams, a nonbinary graduate student at the University of Florida, on the need to **recognize the full spectrum** of people with autism.

“I'm thinking of introducing a unicorn as our mascot. Who doesn't like magic and a bit of good luck to go with their science?”

Annie Ciernia, University of British Columbia, on **the ideal lab mascot**.

“Sitting in a room for two days thinking of nothing else but these children and their parents and the issues they have, and seeing them firsthand, gives you insight you just can't get any other way.”

Stephan Sanders, University of California, San Francisco, on the value of **attending meetings with families** whose children share a rare genetic diagnosis.

“To me, this was all very science fiction, so I’m really excited to be part of that.”

Alysson Muotri, University of California, San Diego, on sending his lab’s **brain organoids into space**.

“The genome just keeps getting weirder and weirder.”

Brien Riley, Virginia Commonwealth University, after attending a session on ‘**poison exons**’ at the **American Society of Human Genetics** meeting in Houston, Texas.