

NEWS

Community Newsletter: COVID-19 at INSAR, PTEN enhancer, baby sib findings

BY SPECTRUM

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This week we're back with tweets unrelated to the first in-person gathering of the **International Society for Autism Research** (INSAR) in more than three years, which ended a week ago yesterday. Well, for the most part. Some conference-goers on social media are still lamenting the spread of COVID-19 at the meeting.

News of post-INSAR positive cases — almost a “mathematical certainty,” according to **Micheal Sandbank**, assistant professor of special education at the University of Texas at Austin — prompted her to pen a thoughtful 19-thread tweet about conference planning with COVID-19 as “**an ongoing reality.**”

#INSAR2022 is over and, unfortunately but predictably, several attendees are discovering they got COVID. We need to talk about conference safety and planning conferences in a future where COVID is an ongoing reality. A long ???? 1/n

— Micheal Sandbank (@MichealSandbank) **May 16, 2022**

The tweet even includes a link to directions for making a do-it-yourself **Corsi-Rosenthal box** to filter the air — a crafty switch-up from your standard conference prep.

This is big: filter the air! You can build an effective air filter fairly cheaply with a box fan, duct tape, and merv-13 air filters. Instead of printing a ton of programs, put all of the

schedule/abstracts online and use that money to build CR boxes 14/n
<https://t.co/fhONglGpQK>

— Micheal Sandbank (@MichealSandbank) **May 16, 2022**

“THIS. I am still sort of reeling from **lack of precautions** and disregard for public health. **@AutismINSAR** we can do and plan better, to protect our communities,” wrote **Kristen Lyall**, associate professor at the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in a quote tweet.

THIS. I am still sort of reeling from lack of precautions and disregard for public health. **@AutismINSAR** we can do and plan better, to protect our communities. It’s not about individual preference or risk. Masking would have been an easy thing for everyone to do to reduce spread. <https://t.co/sYF3tagVYY>

— Kristen Lyall, ScD (@lyallk) **May 17, 2022**

Alycia Halladay, chief science officer of the Autism Science Foundation, chimed in to suggest that people **share such concerns with INSAR directly**.

I encourage everyone to share their thoughts with INSAR directly and not via Twitter.

— Alycia Halladay (@AHalladayASF) **May 17, 2022**

Two days after Halladay’s tweet, INSAR emailed a statement to in-person attendees, acknowledging that “unfortunately, we have been notified by a few attendees that they tested positive for COVID-19 following the event.”

Autism scientists on Twitter are still trying to quantify just **what “a few” means**.

— Dr. Robert M Flight (@rmflight) **May 17, 2022**

The **Infant Brain Imaging Study** (IBIS), too, **tweeted about new work** this past week that documents “**associations between 6-month brain networks** that may support error-based learning and later ASD-associated behaviors.”

A new paper from Zoe Hawks documents observed associations between 6-month brain networks that may support error-based learning and later ASD-associated behaviors, suggesting promising avenues for future theoretically-informed studies of ASD. <https://t.co/ssNkMX8JTC>

— IBIS Network (@ibis_research) **May 17, 2022**

Spectrum covered two other new sets of findings that **draw on IBIS data** presented at INSAR last week.

That’s it for this week’s Community Newsletter! If you have any suggestions for interesting social posts you saw in the autism research sphere, feel free to send an email to news@spectrumnews.org.

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