

NEWS

Community Newsletter: COVID-19 commentary, cortical MAGICC, IACC Advances

BY SPECTRUM

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Before we jump into the ‘science on social media’ pool this Sunday, happy Juneteenth and Father’s Day to our readers in real life.

Ok, onward. A **commentary** about a *JAMA Network Open* paper made a splash on Twitter this week. The commentary was posted by the **Science Media Centre**, a charity in the United Kingdom dedicated to providing evidence-based science information to the public and policymakers.

“Please see comment by me and others before retweeting this,” tweeted **Dorothy Bishop**, professor of developmental neuropsychology at Oxford University in the U.K., offering **a link to the commentary** and a tweet about the *JAMA* paper stating that “infants exposed in utero to #COVID19 almost 2x more likely to have developmental disorders.”

please see comment by me and others before retweeting this <https://t.co/HyjrKKXZRL>
<https://t.co/EHj6vY0HC5>

— Dorothy Bishop (@deevybee) **June 10, 2022**

“This study provides some evidence that women who tested positive for COVID-19 had babies with neurodevelopmental problems. There is no evidence that the association is causative,” wrote **Dimitrios Siassakos**, professor in obstetrics and gynecology at University College London, in the commentary.

When *Spectrum* **explored this same question** in a feature in March, experts told us what Bishop concluded in her comments to the charity: “As the authors note, the main implication is that it would be worth doing a large prospective study of older children using standard, quantitative measures of neurodevelopment to investigate the question of whether maternal COVID in pregnancy affects the offspring.”

“JAMA **open hunting** for alt metrics?” tweeted **Phillip Richmond**, staff scientist at the British Columbia Children’s Hospital Research Institute in Canada.

How was this paper published...JAMA open hunting for alt metics?

— Phillip A Richmond (@Phil_A_Richmond) **June 10, 2022**

The investigators were “clear [the study] had limitations and was preliminary,” Bishop replied, but it was unclear why the journal not only published the paper but gave it a press release.

“**Brandolini’s law** in action,” tweeted **Maarten van Smeden**, associate professor of epidemiology at University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Brandolini’s law in action <https://t.co/Xx3ZQPXMh6>

— Maarten van Smeden (@MaartenvSmeden) **June 10, 2022**

Just a quick housekeeping note: Here at *Spectrum*, we are interested in publishing more quick commentaries on autism-related papers. For example, we were surprised in February when *JAMA Pediatrics* published a study **linking autism to screen time** — and we published a brief essay by **Kristin Sainani**, associate teaching professor of statistics at Stanford University, highlighting why it was **difficult to draw any conclusions** from those results. If you are a researcher and you see a paper you’d like to comment on, send your thoughts to news@spectrumnews.org.

Our preprint watch spotted a new look at **cortical development across various scales** in bioRxiv. The paper shows how MAGICC — Multiscale Atlas of Gene expression for Integrative Cortical Cartography — can connect **dense expression maps, gene sets and annotations**, tweeted **Konrad Wagstyl**, honorary researcher in cognitive neuroscience and neuropsychiatry at University

College London.

Multiscale analysis of cortical neuroanatomy can now be generalised to all kinds of analyses. Dense expression maps, genesets and annotations are being wrapped up with MAGICC ???????? Multiscale Atlas of Gene expression for Integrative Cortical Cartography ????

— Konrad (@KonradWagstyl) **June 14, 2022**

“**Wow beautiful**,” tweeted **Sofie Valk**, research group leader in cognitive neurogenetics at the Max Planck Institute in Sachsen, Germany.

Wow beautiful ????

— Sofie Valk (@sofievalk) **June 14, 2022**

During the first week in June, the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee announced its **2020 Summary of Advances**, featuring the “**top 20 most significant autism research articles** of 2020.”

The 2020 Summary of Advances in Autism Research, which highlights the top 20 most significant autism research articles of 2020 selected by the IACC has now been released, along with an easy-read version! Learn more: <https://t.co/Og4YT3o6pa>
pic.twitter.com/KSIqAWih9b

— IACC_Autism (@IACC_Autism) **June 8, 2022**

To celebrate the inclusion of **Project AIM** in the top 20, **Micheal Sandbank**, assistant professor of special education at the University of Texas at Austin, who led the effort, resuscitated the “**how it started, how it’s going**” meme, tagging her colleagues **Kristen Bottema-Beutel**, associate

professor of special education at Boston College in Massachusetts, and “twitterless Tiffany Woynaroski.” **Woynaroski** is assistant professor of hearing and speech sciences at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

How it started/How it's going **@KristenBott** & twitterless Tiffany Woynaroski
pic.twitter.com/ppGqCzrxV

— Micheal Sandbank (@MichealSandbank) **June 8, 2022**

“**So proud** of Michael Sandbank,” tweeted Bottema-Beutel along with champagne and ‘tada’ emojis.

So proud of **@MichealSandbank**, who proposed Project AIM several years ago as an opportunity to reunite from our training days, and the initial paper was just selected by the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee as one of 20 key advances in autism research in 2020! ?????????? <https://t.co/03snQn81tc>

— Kristen Bottema-Beutel (@KristenBott) **June 8, 2022**

A brief thread detailed new findings on **social attention in autistic women**. The paper **describes different patterns**, including one that shows how autistic women have “their own age-related change of face-looking over time that may indicate that there is a sensitive time window of learning (something related to faces) that do not overlap with non-autistic females,” tweeted co-investigator **Teresa Del Bianco**, postdoctoral researcher of brain and cognitive development at the Birkbeck, University of London in the U.K.

New paper out????“Unique dynamic profiles of social attention in autistic females”, co-authored with Luke Mason, **@mengchuanlai**, **@eva_loth**, Julian Tillman, **@TonyASDorAFC**, **@EmilyDevNeuro** & others from the **@Aims2Trials** group: <https://t.co/RvltC03YQt> Brief ?????below: 1/

— Dr Teresa Del Bianco (@teresadelbianco) **June 9, 2022**

“**Great paper!**” tweeted **Clare Harrop**, assistant professor of allied health sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “All the things this nerd likes :)”

Great paper! Extends our prior work in neat ways - big sample, wider age range. All the things this nerd likes :) <https://t.co/CPIOu7ZoaB>

— Clare Harrop (@ClareHarropPhD) **June 9, 2022**

“**Nerd minds think alike!**” Del Bianco replied.

Woohoo thank you! Indeed lots of inspiration came from your work into this work ???? nerd minds think alike! <https://t.co/nasQBTolhT>

— Dr Teresa Del Bianco (@teresadelbianco) **June 9, 2022**

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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