

NEWS

Community Newsletter: Lessons from lockdowns, screen-time skepticism, protein transport in the brain

BY SPECTRUM

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Longer days in the Northern Hemisphere, longer threads about autism research on Twitter — welcome to the first Community Newsletter from *Spectrum* this February.

Liz Pellicano, professor of education at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, threaded together 14 tweets full of COVID-19 lockdown **lessons for autism education**. The insights, published in December, come from a project led by Pellicano's colleague — doctoral student **Melanie Heyworth** — and a team of autistic and non-autistic researchers. One central message is that although the initial switch to remote learning was particularly difficult for autistic students, “after that initial period of transition, there were autistic children who reportedly flourished at home both personally and educationally,” Pellicano wrote.

https://twitter.com/liz_pellicano/status/1486629279374794756

“Fantastic paper,” tweeted the Center for Research in Autism at University College London in the United Kingdom.

https://twitter.com/CRAE_IOE/status/1486639691101310976

Andrew Whitehouse, Angela Wright Bennett professor of autism research at the Telethon Kids Institute and the University of Western Australia in Perth, spent 11 tweets taking down a paper published in *JAMA Pediatrics* this past week asserting an association between screen time exposure in 1-year-olds and autism diagnosis.

“Almost every headline you read about it will be wrong,” he tweeted, going on to explain the study's shortcomings, including the fact that it was based solely on parent reports.

<https://twitter.com/AJOWhitehouse/status/1488343714338525185>

“Here we go again,” tweeted **Dorothy Bishop**, professor of developmental neuropsychology at Oxford University in the U.K.

<https://twitter.com/deevybee/status/1488405682495885312>

Spectrum published its own **quick critique** from **Kristin Sainani**, associate teaching professor of epidemiology and population health at Stanford University in California.

Maybe a picture is worth 1,000 threads. The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, tweeted **an image** this week to illustrate the discovery — by Scripps Research faculty **Hollis Cline**, Hahn professor of neuroscience, and **John Yates III**, professor of molecular medicine — of a new type of intercellular communication in the brain, which could help to explain faulty protein transport in conditions such as autism. *Spectrum* **profiled Cline** last week.

<https://twitter.com/scrippsresearch/status/1486841458791530496>

Troubled by typos that seem to emerge out of thin air every time you open a document to review it? **David Mandell**, professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, **tweeted a compelling theory**.

<https://twitter.com/DSMandell/status/1488302574272921602>

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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