

SPOTTED

Spotted around the web: Brain morphology; mild 22q11.2 effects; eugenics apology

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3 FEBRUARY 2023

WEEK OF JANUARY 30TH

Research roundup

- Three-quarters of interviewed autistic adults say that genetic testing should be offered only to those who are able to consent. *Spectrum* covered the process of **informed consent** last week. [Genetics in Medicine](#)
- Autistic people make more errors than non-autistic people in a face-recognition task, which may result from perceptual differences rather than memory problems. [Autism Research](#)
- Autistic children tend to have thinner gray matter and less surface gyrification than non-autistic children, and these brain differences correlate with language skills. [Scientific Reports](#)
- Pediatricians are more likely to dismiss autism as a diagnosis than are multispecialty diagnostic teams. [JAMA Network Open](#)
- Robot assistants configured with algorithms that recognize facial expressions can adapt to subtler actions of an autistic toddler. [Frontiers in Robotics and AI](#)
- Autistic people have higher rates of diabetes, dyslipidemia and heart disease than do non-autistic people. [JAMA Pediatrics](#)
- Copy number variants in the 22q11.2 chromosomal region occur in people who don't have conditions such as autism, cardiac defects or psychiatric conditions, but who may have other mild traits. [American Journal of Human Genetics](#)
- Female mice that experience isolation during adolescence show increased social-approach behavior, which correlates with decreased activity of parvalbumin inhibitory circuits in the left orbitofrontal cortex, according to a preprint. [bioRxiv](#)
- A new MRI method can delineate the location and extent of oxygenation in the human placenta throughout pregnancy. [Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#)

- Repetitive behaviors increase with age in mice missing part of the SHANK3 gene, a model of autism. *European Journal of Neuroscience*
- Non-autistic people's performance on the so-called director task worsens in a social situation compared with a non-social situation; autistic people's performance is unchanged. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*

Compartmentalized imaging: Researchers study the placenta in three subsections — from left to right: the intervillous space, placental vessels and placental tissue.

- Perineuronal nets — support structures made of extracellular matrix components — are overexpressed in the cerebellum in a mouse model of autism. *Neuroscience*
- A review of studies finds the coronavirus pandemic generally had a negative and often underestimated impact on autistic adults in terms of illness and disrupted services. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*

Science and society

- Neuroscientist Hongkui Zeng, director of the Allen Institute for Brain Science, is the 2023 recipient of the National Academy of Science's Pradel Research Award, which recognizes mid-career excellence, for her work on the development and diversity of neural circuits. *National Academy of Sciences*
- The American Society of Human Genetics has formally apologized for past actions supporting eugenics, as well as other harms and injustices stemming from racism. *Science*
- Mike Graglia, co-founder of a research fund for people with mutations in the SYNGAP1 gene, describes his family's bumpy path to a diagnosis for his son. *Spectrum* has covered **family-led efforts** to improve knowledge about and treatments for the syndrome. *Newsweek*
- The U.S. National Institutes of Health has called for increased inclusion of disabled people in its workforce and in its funded research. *Nature*
- Data-sharing mandates by funding agencies may be good for science, but they are also a burden on individual scientists. *Science*
- The coronavirus public health emergency in the United States is set to expire in May. *Spectrum* **previously reported** on how this transition may affect access to remote autism therapy. *The New York Times*
- Neuroscientist Christopher McBain has been promoted to director of intramural research at the Eunice Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. nichd.nih.gov
- The Broad Institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has reinstated Eric Lander, who was forced out of his role as science adviser to U.S. President Joe Biden after

a White House investigation found that he had bullied subordinates. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Cite this article: <https://doi.org/10.53053/BPDN3991>
