

SPOTTED

Political science; dedicated digs; name game

BY KATIE MOISSE

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Political science

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have **different stances** on science. Clinton, for instance, says she will “significantly increase” **funding for autism research**, including investigations into the condition’s genetic roots. Trump, on the other hand, **believes vaccines cause autism**. (He also **calls climate change a “hoax,”** but I digress.)

A commentary published Wednesday in *Science Translational Medicine* urges both presidential nominees to **support biomedical science**. Author **Scott Friedman**, dean for therapeutic discovery at Mount Sinai’s Icahn School of Medicine in New York City, argues that a strong investment in research will help keep Americans and America healthy.

“Wise choices by the next U.S. president will ensure improvements in public health and maximize taxpayers’ return on investment,” Friedman writes.

Friedman lays out an eight-item wish list for the president-to-be. His requests range from promoting diversity in biomedical science and fully capturing “the breadth of talent among our future trainees” to investing in public-private partnerships to bridge the economic “valley of death” in drug development.

SOURCES:

Science Translational Medicine / 10 Aug 2016

A physician-scientist’s wish list for the 2016 U.S. presidential candidates

<http://stm.sciencemag.org/content/8/351/351ed11>

Dedicated digs

Many adults with autism struggle to find **suitable housing**. Enter a new housing project in Heidelberg, Pennsylvania.

Half of the project's 42 apartments are **reserved for people on the spectrum**, according to an article in last week's *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. The other half will go to people with annual incomes under \$29,000 who do not have autism.

"Most housing for people with autism is just for people with autism," said Elliot Frank, president and founder of Autism Housing Development Corp. of Pittsburgh. "Inclusiveness is what makes this different."

The wheelchair-accessible apartments are a 30-minute drive from Pittsburgh and range in rent from \$565 to \$795.

SOURCES:

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette / 05 Aug 2016

Heidelberg apartments are for adults with autism — and others

<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/west/2016/08/05/Heidelberg-apartments-for-adults-with-autism-and-others/stories/201608050009>

Editing armory

CRISPR may be the hottest gene-editing tool right now, but it's not the only one. And depending on what you're trying to do, it may not be the best.

An article in this week's *Nature* highlights some **alternatives to CRISPR**, which uses an enzyme called CAS-9 to **snip out or swap DNA sequences**. Using a **smaller version of CAS-9** results in a technique that's more suitable for delivering gene therapy, for example. Another variation uses an **enzyme Cpf1 instead** of CAS-9.

One CRISPR alternative, **NgAgo**, is the subject of some controversy. Many researchers say the tool, described in the May issue of *Nature Genetics*, **does not work**. If it does, "it's so challenging that it's not worth pursuing," **Gaétan Burgio**, geneticist at the Australian National University in Canberra, told *Nature*. "It won't surpass CRISPR, not by a long shot."

SOURCES:

Nature / 08 Aug 2016

Beyond CRISPR: A guide to the many other ways to edit a genome

<http://www.nature.com/news/beyond-crispr-a-guide-to-the-many-other-ways-to-edit-a-genome-1.20388>

Name game

Condensing years of work into a five-page manuscript is no easy feat. Even harder is writing a catchy but accurate title for said paper.

Some journals want headlines that sum up a study's main finding. Others prohibit these so-called declarative titles, fearing they may **influence a reader's perception** of a study's conclusions. But a study published last week in *Research Integrity and Peer Review* suggests these fears are unfounded.

Researchers surveyed 144 doctors and students in their senior year of medical or dental school to gauge their reactions to two study abstracts with different titles: "Anticox reduces pain in Green's syndrome: results of a randomized placebo-controlled trial" and "Anticox versus placebo in Green's syndrome: results of a randomized trial."

The researchers then asked participants whether they agree or disagree with the statement "Anticox is an effective treatment for pain in Green's syndrome." They found no difference in readers' perceptions of the study's conclusions. This suggests that declarative titles have little influence on a reader's initial impression of the work.

SOURCES:

Research Integrity and Peer Review / 04 Aug 2016

Do declarative titles affect readers' perceptions of research findings? A randomized trial

<http://researchintegrityjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s41073-016-0018-3>

Things that make you go HM

You may not recognize Henry Molaison's name, but odds are you recognize his initials. He was H.M., one of the most famous case studies in neuroscience. He had surgery in 1953 to ease his epilepsy, but the experimental procedure left him unable to make new memories.

Molaison died in 2008. But a book published this week is bringing attention to his life and the battle

for his brain.

An excerpt from the book, “Patient H.M.: A Story of Memory, Madness, and Family Secrets,” appeared in *The New York Times* on Sunday and highlights a dispute over **who should ‘own’ the precious tissue**. It also raises questions about the fate of decades of raw data collected by Massachusetts Institute of Technology neuroscientist **Suzanne Corkin**, who died in May.

The excerpt lays out a conversation with Corkin in which she admits to shredding much of her work on H.M. and plans to shred some more.

“You can’t just take one test on one day and draw conclusions about it,” she says, defending her decision to ensure no one else can reanalyze the data. “That’s a very dangerous thing to do.”

This week, some 200 neuroscientists **wrote letters to *The Times*** saying that the excerpt paints an unfair portrait of Corkin.

“We believe that no records were destroyed and, to the contrary, that professor Corkin worked in her final days to organize and preserve all records,” **James DiCarlo**, head brain and cognitive sciences at MIT wrote in a **letter to the paper** on Tuesday.

SOURCES:

The New York Times / 03 Aug 2016

The brain that couldn’t remember

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/07/magazine/the-brain-that-couldnt-remember.html>

Job news

Making a career move? Send your news to **jobmoves@spectrumnews.org**.
