

**SPOTTED**

# Randomized trial repository; Beijing brain center; global science march and more

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## WEEK OF APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>

### Randomized trial repository

Wouldn't it be great to have a list of all randomized controlled trials of autism treatments? Well, here you go: Investigators have compiled spreadsheets listing **all 529 such studies** they identified, specifying DOIs, types of intervention and other key features. The spreadsheets are included as supplemental material in an 11 April survey published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.

The trials have an average of 49 participants, pointing to a need for bigger studies, the researchers write. The number of trials has increased sharply in the past decade, and the most common intervention assessed is antipsychotic medication. The journal that published the most trials? The very same one that published the survey.

#### SOURCES:

**Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders** / 11 Apr 2018

Brief report: Autism spectrum disorder: A comprehensive survey of randomized controlled trials

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10803-018-3569-y>

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### Beijing brain center

China is establishing a **brain science center in Beijing** to serve as the core facility for the country's ambitious brain research project, *Nature* reported 5 April. In addition to 50 investigators based at the new center, another 100 across the nation will be receiving external grants as part of the brain project. China hopes the project will rival similar large brain initiatives in other countries.

**SOURCES:**

**Nature** / 05 Apr 2018

Beijing launches pioneering brain-science centre

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-04122-3>

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## Global science march

Science fans on every continent joined forces again on 14 April for this year's March for Science. *Science* tracked dispatches from **march groups around the globe**, including a tweeted image from scientists overwintering in Antarctica. The team holds a sign quoting naturalist Alexander von Humboldt in German: "Knowledge and understanding are the joy and justification of humankind."

**SOURCES:**

**Science** / 17 Apr 2018

A final dash across the United States: Updates from the 2018 March for Science

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/04/final-dash-across-united-states-updates-2018-march-science>

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## Drug disappointment

After a promising start **out of the gate**, riluzole has not proved effective for autism-related irritability in a randomized placebo-controlled trial. Riluzole is a medication currently approved to treat the neurodegenerative condition amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The trial, reported 11 April in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, was tiny, involving only eight people on the spectrum **who had irritability** that wasn't responsive to other therapy. They each took the drug daily for five weeks and placebo for five weeks, with a two-week no-treatment period in between.

**SOURCES:**

**Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders** / 11 Apr 2018

A randomized placebo-controlled cross-over pilot study of riluzole for drug-refractory irritability in autism spectrum disorder

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10803-018-3562-5>

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## Brain imaging database

The aptly named **NeuroVault** offers brain researchers a place to post and find maps and other data derived from brain imaging studies. Investigators can use the interface to upload papers and images or to pore over the data on offer. The effort exists to “collect and distribute statistical maps of the brain,” according to the site’s **‘frequently asked questions’** page.

### SOURCES:

**NeuroVault** / 18 Apr 2018

NeuroVault

<https://neurovault.org/>

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## Accessing education

Many parents of children with autism are familiar with the IEP, or individualized education program, a document that confirms the services a school will provide to a child needing special education. But for a black parent, **attending IEP meetings** can come with an additional layer of challenges. Writing 17 April for *Catapult*, **Taylor Harris** chronicles what it’s like to advocate for her son “in a room full of people who don’t look like us.” This distinction creates obstacles to access that go beyond what many parents and children encounter in an IEP meeting, she writes.

Pinning down the moments she and her husband recognize bias isn’t straightforward, Harris writes. “It might be in the way my husband gets cut off mid-sentence, or how I share the same concern five times without being acknowledged,” she says, or how her husband feels like he has to counter resistance “with just the right tone so as not to be confused with the angry black man.”

### SOURCES:

**Catapult** / 17 Apr 2018

Two black parents of an undiagnosed child walk into a meeting: On race, special education, and our son’s IEP

<https://catapult.co/stories/column-what-genes-cant-tell-us-education-race-and-our-sons-iep>

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## Lego Titanic

An Icelandic boy with autism has gained fame for building the **world’s largest replica** of the *Titanic*, the ill-fated ship, using Lego bricks. The 26-foot-long, 5-foot-tall model took more than 700

hours and 56,000 bricks to build, *CNN* reported 16 April. The replica is on display at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

**SOURCES:**

**CNN** / 16 Apr 2018

Boy with autism builds world's largest Lego Titanic replica

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/16/health/lego-titanic-replica-boy-autism/index.html>

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## Acceptable apparel

Scratchy clothing can feel like a cactus suit for someone with **sensory sensitivities**, which are common among people with autism. PBS Kids and online retailer Zappos have teamed up to create options for children who can't bear to wear clothing with **unfriendly tags and fasteners**. The products will be soft, button-free, gender-neutral and reversible, *Disability Scoop* reported 12 April.

Zappos began offering 'adaptive clothing' for the disability community last year and has a staff of specialists who help shoppers with specific adaptive-clothing needs, *Disability Scoop* reported.

**SOURCES:**

**Disability Scoop** / 12 Apr 2018

Zappos, PBS launching apparel for children with special needs

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2018/04/12/zappos-pbs-launching-apparel/24970/>

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## News tips

Do you have a new paper coming out? Are you making a career move? Did you see a study or news story that you want to share? Send your news tips to **[news@spectrumnews.org](mailto:news@spectrumnews.org)**.

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