

SPOTTED

# Spotted around the web: Naturalistic research; AUTS2 gene; cerebellar GABA

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### Research roundup

- Special-education teachers are most inclined to use evidence-based practices for working with autistic students if they learned about or practiced them during teacher training, according to a qualitative study. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*
- Brain organoids carrying a variant of the autism-linked gene AUTS2 show altered growth, cell proliferation and organization compared with wildtype organoids. *Brain*
- Conducting research in naturalistic settings can improve scientists' understanding of and translatable findings for children with neurodevelopmental conditions, researchers write in an editorial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*
- The Japanese version of the Interoceptive Sensory Questionnaire is reliable and shows good internal consistency; autistic people tend to have high scores, which is thought to represent confusion in describing internal states. *Scientific Reports*
- Autistic children who were born extremely preterm are more likely than those born at term to have delays in speech milestones. *Autism Research*
- Poor-quality sleep may be a factor in regulating synaptic plasticity and learning in rodent models of autism, according to a review. *Neurobiology of Sleep and Circadian Rhythms*
- Levels of the neurotransmitter GABA in the cerebellum are not altered in autistic people, despite previous findings that the levels are lower in cortical areas compared with non-autistic people. *Autism Research*

**Zzzz factor:** Sleep quality may determine learning outcomes in animal models of autism.

- Autism affects 2.3 percent of U.S.-based children, is diagnosed via comprehensive evaluation by a team of specialists, and is treated mainly with behavioral interventions, according to a review article. *JAMA*
- Clinical and educational interventions that focus on autistic people's strengths may boost their well-being. *Autism*
- Parents of autistic children who experience high stress spend less time than other parents engaging with their children in shared activities; however, the causal relationship is not clear. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*
- People with intellectual or developmental conditions who have given birth are less likely than those without the conditions to initiate and rely on breastfeeding with their infants in the hospital. *The Lancet Public Health*

### Science and society

- The Autism Science Foundation has announced new funding for research proposals that evaluate "profound autism." *Autism Science Foundation*
- Novelist Matt Haig reflects on his recent autism diagnosis and his fictional characters, who often share his feeling of being a "fish out of water." *The New York Times*

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