

## SPOTTED

# Spotted around the web: Week of 16 December 2019

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### Research roundup

- New tools such as cultured progenitor cells have given researchers insight into placenta formation. *Nature Reviews Genetics*
- Researchers studying the evolutionary progression of microglia, the brain's immune cells, have identified a core group of genes that are turned on in the microglia of all vertebrates, from fish to humans. *Cell*
- A review of 83 studies finds scant evidence to support the use of cannabinoids for mental conditions such as depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *The Lancet Psychiatry*
- Caregivers may underestimate the effects of trauma in autistic children, in part because some autism traits overlap with symptoms of trauma. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*
- Some children with autism who are characterized as 'high-functioning' may have rare genetic mutations typically associated with intellectual disability. *Journal of Neural Transmission*
- Infant siblings of autistic children show lower neural responses to hearing their own name than they do to hearing an unfamiliar one — and lower responses than controls do. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*
- A computer-based screening tool ensured that every child attending a pediatric clinic received an autism screen, but clinicians only followed up on half of the positive screens. *JAMA Network Open*

### Science and society

- A set of viruses called phages have evolved resistance to gene editing that uses CRISPR-like bacterial tools. [\*The Atlantic\*](#)
- *Time* magazine's 'Person of the Year,' Greta Thunberg, epitomizes the strengths of autism: speaking frankly and showing impatience with others' dishonesty and rationalizations, Steve Silberman writes. [\*Twitter\*](#)
- Greta Thunberg and other advocates with autism often face hostility and dismissive attitudes, writes autistic activist Lydia X. Z. Brown. [\*The Washington Post\*](#)
- Francis Collins, director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, has announced that he will follow up on recommendations to address sexual harassment; these include creating reporting requirements for lab heads and providing loans to support victims. [\*Science\*](#)
- Group homes for people with disabilities receive the lion's share of state funding for such individuals in Minnesota but often fail to deliver promised services, leaving residents ignored and isolated. [\*Star Tribune\*](#)
- Autism researcher Nenad Sestan of the Yale School of Medicine has been named one of *Nature's* 10 people who mattered in science this year. [\*Nature\*](#)
- The U.S. agency that regulates antitrust law has challenged a move by Illumina, the biggest DNA sequencing company, to acquire its rival, Pacific Biosciences. [\*STAT\*](#)
- Men use more positive words, such as 'remarkable' and 'promising,' to describe research results in the titles and abstracts of scientific papers than women do. [\*The Atlantic\*](#)

## Publishing

- A new peer-review platform does not require would-be authors to select the journal they plan to submit their work to. [\*PLOS Blogs\*](#)

## Funding news

The new U.S. federal budget provides increased funds for science agencies, including the National Institutes of Health. [\*Science\*](#)

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