

SPOTTED

Spotted around the web: Week of 31 December 2018

BY KNVUL SHEIKH

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 31ST

Research roundup

- The deletion of a large chunk of a chromosome may alter not only the expression of neighboring genes, but also that of the rest of the genome. *Nature Communications*
- A lower density of nerve fibers in the corpus callosum may help explain the slower processing seen in the brains of some people with autism. *Molecular Autism*
- Poor motor skills at 6 months of age may augur an autism diagnosis and difficulties with expressive language in children at high risk for autism. *Infant Behavior and Development*
- Repetitive behaviors in autistic children don't necessarily interfere with their ability to explore and learn from their environment. *PLOS One*
- When looking at a face, it is easier to focus on the eyes if the face is tilted to the side, an adjustment that may help autistic individuals who have difficulty engaging in conversations. *Perception*
- Support cells in the brain called glia show modest changes in a rat model of autism. *Molecular Autism*
- Video game-based therapy may help children with autism and co-occurring attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*

Science and society

- The partial shutdown of the U.S. government that started 22 December continues to affect a growing number of federal institutions, including the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration. *The Wall Street Journal*
- Nearly 30 pharmaceutical companies are reportedly planning to raise the U.S. prices of their medicines this month. *Reuters*

- Crowdfunding to cover gaps in medical care often raises money for treatments that are not scientifically sound. *NPR*
- A new PBS documentary on James Watson, the co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, reveals that the scientist remains unapologetic about his racist view of black people's intelligence, despite the lack of genetic evidence to support it. *The New York Times*
- A science-based approach to learning how to read, rather than the popular 'contextual guessing' method used in schools, may help improve children's reading proficiency. *NPR*
- A Los Angeles-based software-testing company is staffed entirely by autistic individuals who are interested in coding and debugging. *BBC*
- Drake University psychologist Maria Valdovinos is advocating for autistic families to get better access to applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapies in Iowa. *Des Moines Register*
- Alabama lawmakers passed a bill requiring insurance companies to cover ABA therapy for children with autism. *CBS42*
- Companies that have more inclusionary policies for people with intellectual disabilities outperform their competitors. *The New York Times*

Autism and the arts

- The McNeese Theatre in Lake Charles, Louisiana, is debuting a play about autism this spring to increase public understanding of neurodiversity. *KPLC*
- Some mental-health experts are calling for 'trigger warnings' on films that may negatively affect people who are sensitive to certain themes or stimuli. *Psychology Today*

Publishing

- Some lab leaders use a points system to determine authorship, based on the amount each lab member contributed to a project. *Science*
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