

SPOTTED

Spotted around the web: Week of 10 December 2018

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 10TH

Research roundup

- State-level mandates covering autism-specific services have helped shift the burden of healthcare spending from families to insurers in the United States. *Pediatrics*
- Scientists have developed a fruit-fly model of autism that may help researchers understand the genetic basis of sensitivity to bright lights and loud sounds, a common feature of autism. *Proceedings of The Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*
- Replenishing certain gut bacteria reverses social deficits in several mouse models of autism. *Neuron*
- Genes related to pain show different expression patterns in children with autism than in controls, which may hint at why some autistic individuals are relatively insensitive to painful stimuli. *Journal of Molecular Neuroscience*
- Discrepancies between direct tests and caregiver reports of problem-solving difficulties occur far more often with autistic children than with others. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*

Science and society

- Two experimental autism drugs put on accelerated tracks for agency approval still have difficult hurdles to cross before becoming widely available. *Disability Scoop*
- Experiments using human fetal tissue have stalled in the United States while the government audits all federally funded research using the tissue. *STAT*
- A California school where a 13-year-old boy with autism died last week after being restrained by a staff member broke several state regulations, according to officials. *NPR*
- The U.S. Department of Education is investing \$2.5 million in a program that aims to use virtual reality to help foster social skills in children with autism and learning difficulties.

Variety

- A pediatrician and father of an autistic girl explains how the anti-vaccine movement takes legislative attention away from services that children on the spectrum need. [The Guardian](#)
- Dozens of doctors fail to disclose financial ties with pharmaceutical and healthcare companies when their research is published. [The New York Times](#)
- Some parents are fighting to legalize cannabis extracts to treat sleep problems, anxiety, seizures and other health issues in their autistic children. [Tonic](#)
- Joseph's University in Philadelphia has become the first Division I basketball school to include sensory break rooms for people with autism and their families to use during basketball games. [The Washington Post](#)
- A number of Boston-area theater companies have started producing sensory-friendly plays. [WBUR](#)
- A group that helps autistic adults is suing neighbors for harassment and vandalism. [Asbury Park Press NJ](#)
- Officials are investigating a former University of Illinois child psychiatrist whose conduct placed “research priorities above patient welfare.” [ProPublica](#)

Autism and the arts

- The National Institutes of Health shied away from an exhibit featuring portraits of people with rare diseases, asking organizers to remove a painting because it may be too distressing for others to see. [STAT](#)
- Harry Potter fans have taken to writing their own stories, reimagining the series with autistic characters. [The Conversation](#)

Publishing

- Journal editors say controversial research studies such as the recent ‘CRISPR babies’ experiment should be reviewed carefully to ensure they meet ethical standards. [STAT](#)
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