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Spotted around the web: Week of 23 July 2018

BY **EMILY WILLINGHAM**

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WEEK OF JULY 23RD

Research roundup

- Phages work together and even self-sacrifice for ‘Team Virus’ to defeat CRISPR. ***The Atlantic***
- Researchers plan to use a $2 million grant to look at possible links between one gene variant and greater autism prevalence among boys. **George Washington University press release**
- Unusually fast signal processing, rather than more sensitive signal detection, might underlie hypersensitivity to touch in autism. ***Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders***
- Videos of cartoon vehicles bearing images of real human facial expressions help Chinese children on the spectrum with emotion recognition. ***PLOS One***
- A new tool facilitates testing for mutations that lead to gains instead of losses in protein function. ***American Journal of Human Genetics***
- A protein that regulates gene access is critical to the development and function of oligodendrocytes, the cells that produce myelin. ***Nature Communications***
- In a mouse model of Rett syndrome, producing even low levels of the MeCP2 protein restores some motor function and extends the lifespan. ***Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences***
- Speaking of mice, caging-system choices could be confounding the results of maternal immune activation studies. ***Brain, Behavior, and Immunity***
- A pedigree analysis of 34 families turns up cross-generational effects from deletions of NRXN1, a gene linked to autism. ***European Journal of Medical Genetics***
- Hundreds of gene variants, including some on the X chromosome, weakly affect educational attainment. ***Nature Genetics***
- Adolescents and young adults on the spectrum benefit from learning about autism through an online course tailored to their needs. ***Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders***
- Compared with typically developing children, those with language disorders have more

"problem behaviors." ***Pediatrics***
- Difficulty recognizing emotion in voices could trace to trouble processing features of sound, such as vocal pitch. ***Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders***
- For the developmental biology nerds out there: Researchers have coaxed what looks a lot like gastrulation (the first embryonic split into tissue types) from artificial mouse embryos. ***Nature Cell Biology***
- For the genetics nerds out there: How about some remarkable electron microscopy images of a complete adult fruit fly brain, with a newly discovered cell type? ***Cell***

Science and society

- Two Nigerian centers for early autism intervention are in the works. ***Nigerian Tribune***
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is looking into allowing drug imports from other countries to offset steep price increases. ***STAT***
- It's 2018 — do you know where your former postdoctoral researchers are working? ***Nature***
- The need for flexibility and family leave makes holding down a job a struggle for parents of children with disabilities. **Working Families**
- Doctors with disabilities bring an important perspective to workplace attitudes and their own work with patients. ***NPR***
- A celebration of the life of Stanford University neuroscientist Ben Barres is planned as a satellite event at the 2018 Society for Neuroscience meeting in San Diego, California. **Twitter**
- Immigrant children detained in government facilities without their family are being administered psychotropic drugs without parental consent. ***ProPublica***
- Researchers are developing digital games for cognitive and personality testing in children. ***PyGaze***
- An educator calls for a transformation in how schools teach autistic students. ***eSchool News***
- The controversy over transgenerational epigenetic inheritance rages on, and an outspoken neuroscientist weighs in on some of the gaps. ***Wiring the Brain***
- Residents of a housing complex in South China who oppose government plans to lease units to families with children on the spectrum have deeply uninformed views about autism. ***Global Times***
- The U.S. National Institutes of Health wants to hear from anyone and everyone about ways to get the most from its BRAIN initiative, including ideas about tools, data sharing and ethics. **National Institutes of Health**
- In this small preprint study, scores on the Graduate Record Exam were not at all predictive of success in graduate school. ***bioRxiv***
- Calls and laws to ban plastic straws overlook the needs of the disability community, a not-uncommon effect of well-intended policymaking. ***The Washington Post***
- Genomics research legend Craig Venter is the target of a slew of accusations about stealing trade secrets from a company where he served as chief executive

officer. ***Endpoints News***

- Academics on Twitter are offering advice for aspiring postdoctoral researchers about what to include in an application cover letter. **Twitter**

Autism and the arts

- A new collection of essays, “Spectrum Women: Walking to the Beat of Autism,” features entries from 15 autistic women writing about their experiences. **Jessica Kingsley Publishers**

Publishing

- Watch brain cells in action on the newly launched Allen Brain Observatory website, where the debut data release shows neurons in the mouse visual cortex responding to stimuli. **Allen Institute for Brain Science**

Funding news

- Research output shrinks when funding grows, and institutions with less grant money yield more bang for the grant buck, researchers say. ***bioRxiv***