

**SPOTTED**

# Spotted: Screening stance; outlawed words

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28 AUGUST 2015

**WEEK OF AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup>**

## Screening stance

Three weeks after the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force said it would **withhold support for routine autism screening**, the vice chair of the task force defended the controversial stance.

Writing for *U.S. News & World Report* Tuesday, **David Grossman**, a practicing pediatrician, stressed that **more research is needed** to suss out the benefits of screening toddlers with no obvious autism symptoms.

“In the face of unclear evidence, we encourage doctors to use their clinical judgment when deciding whom to screen and when to test young children without apparent symptoms for autism,” Grossman wrote. “This is not a recommendation against screening. Rather, it’s a recognition that the evidence is insufficient, and more research is needed.”

We asked autism experts to weigh in on the screening debate. **Read their opinions here**, and tell us what you think in the Comments section.

### SOURCES:

**U.S News & World Report** / 25 Aug 2015

What Every Parent Should Know About Autism Screening

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/patient-advice/articles/2015/08/25/what-every-parent-should-know-about-autism-screening>

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## Outlawed words

Earlier this month, a group of (obviously frustrated) psychologists published a veritable encyclopedia of 50 “inaccurate, misleading, misused, ambiguous and logically confused words and phrases” that they propose **banning from the scientific vernacular**.

On this list, published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, is ‘autism epidemic.’ As the team points out, the term implies a sudden increase in the incidence of autism, but **evidence does not support that**. “If the rates of autism are increasing, the increase would appear to be slight at best, hardly justifying the widespread claim of an ‘epidemic,’” they wrote.

**SOURCES:**

**Frontiers in Psychology** / 03 Aug 2015

Fifty psychological and psychiatric terms to avoid

<http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01100/full>

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## Short and sweet

Scientists wishing to rack up citations should consider erring on the side of brevity when selecting a title for their papers. A study published Wednesday in *Royal Society Open Science* found that papers with **short titles receive significantly more citations** than those with heftier headings.

Researchers looked at the title length and citation rates for 140,000 papers published between 2007 and 2013. Shorter titles were associated with more citations both across and within journals.

Clear, concise titles can draw more eyes to a paper, Karl Zeimelis, chief physical sciences editor at *Nature*, **told Nature News**.

The authors of the new study followed their own advice, keeping their title — “The advantage of short paper titles” — brief and to the point.

**SOURCES:**

**Royal Society Open Science** / 26 Aug 2015

The advantage of short paper titles

<http://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/2/8/150266>

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## Guiding grads

Few people would argue that graduate school can be a stressful experience marked by intense competition, and a sobering shortage of time and money. However, few universities offer guidance or support during these challenging years.

That's why **Inger Mewburn**, director of research training at the Australian National University in Canberra, is offering a free 10-week course called "**How to Survive Your PhD.**" The online course, which kicked off on Wednesday, will help students recognize and cope with the fear, loneliness and frustration that often accompany grad school.

Those emotional obstacles contribute to one in three students dropping out before completing their degree, according to Mewburn. "Of course you have to be smart to finish a Ph.D.," she says in **the course's introductory video**. "But you also have to be emotionally resilient."

**SOURCES:**

**edX** / 26 Aug 2015

How to survive your Ph.D.

<https://www.edx.org/course/how-survive-phd-anux-rsit-01x#!>

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## Middle East first

The Middle East is getting its **first interdisciplinary university-based center** dedicated to the study and treatment of autism. The \$75 million Autism Center will be based in Jerusalem, Israel, and will be jointly overseen by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Hadassah University Medical Center.

"Our goal in establishing the Autism Center is to lead Israel and the Middle East in research, training, clinical services and community engagement for the benefit of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families," **David Lichtstein**, dean of medicine at Hebrew University, said in a statement.

**SOURCES:**

**Hebrew University of Jerusalem** / 13 Aug 2015

Middle East's Leading Autism Center to be Established by Hebrew University and Hadassah Medical Center

<http://new.huji.ac.il/en/article/27508>

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