

SPOTTED

Memory shuttle; fly eyes; gaze avoidance and more

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6 JULY 2018

WEEK OF JULY 2ND

Memory shuttle

A protein that helps deliver sights and sounds to the brain might behave atypically in people who have **autism, intellectual disability or schizophrenia**. Mice without this protein, called gamma-CaMKII, have impaired spatial memory, researchers reported 22 June in *Nature Communications*.

SOURCES:

Nature Communications / 22 Jun 0218

Calmodulin shuttling mediates cytonuclear signaling to trigger experience-dependent transcription and memory

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-04705-8>

Gaze avoidance

Having more autism traits is tied to **decreased responsiveness to direct gaze** in people without an autism diagnosis, according to findings published 27 June in *Psychological Medicine*. The researchers say their findings support the concept of a continuum of autism traits from neurotypical people to those with autism.

SOURCES:

Psychological Medicine / 27 Jun 2018

Access to awareness of direct gaze is related to autistic traits

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/access-to-awareness-of-direct-gaze-is-related-to-autistic-traits/AAD1C935758556E75A51CE0698CB03C3>

Fly eyes

The deletion of **chromosomal region 16p.11.2 is tied to autism**. Genes within the region also **interact** to alter eye development in fruit flies, according to findings published 29 June in *Nature Communications*.

SOURCES:

Nature Communications / 29 Jun 2018

Pervasive genetic interactions modulate neurodevelopmental defects of the autism-associated 16p11.2 deletion in *Drosophila melanogaster*

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-04882-6>

Social understanding

Adolescents with autism and above-average verbal intelligence can apply social understanding to tasks representing social scenarios, but **struggle to apply** what they know in spontaneous social situations. Researchers published these findings 29 June in *Cognitive Processing*.

SOURCES:

Cognitive Processing / 29 Jun 2018

Social behaviour and social cognition in high-functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD): two sides of the same coin?

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10339-018-0866-5>

Robot learning

Robots intended to treat people with autism need to accurately interpret human emotions, but many people on the spectrum have atypical facial expressions. The upshot is that the **robots would need to learn** the many ways that faces express each emotion. Researchers reported progress on that front 27 June in *Science Robotics*.

SOURCES:

Science Robotics / 27 Jun 2018

Personalized machine learning for robot perception of affect and engagement in autism therapy

<http://robotics.sciencemag.org/content/3/19/eaao6760>

Goldwater revision requested

More than 20 mental health practitioners have called on the American Psychiatric Association to revise the ‘Goldwater rule,’ which prevents members from commenting on the **mental health of public figures**. The signatories argue that withholding their views would be unethical if doing so would leave the public in “clear and present danger,” *STAT* reported 28 June.

SOURCES:

STAT / 28 Jun 2018

Psychiatrists call for rollback of policy banning discussion of public figures’ mental health
<https://www.statnews.com/2018/06/28/psychiatrists-goldwater-rule-rollback/>

Science stars

Nature has drawn up a list of “**science stars of East Asia**.” Researchers on the list are making important contributions to microRNA research, speech recognition, the control of infectious disease and CRISPR technology, the editors wrote in their 27 June roundup.

SOURCES:

Nature / 27 Jun 2018

Science stars of East Asia
<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05506-1>

Budget bump

The National Institutes of Health is “on a roll,” says Francis Collins, the institute’s director. His positive outlook stems from what’s likely to be the institute’s **fourth consecutive budget increase**, amounting to about a \$2 billion bump, *STAT* reported 26 June.

SOURCES:

STAT / 01 Jan 1970

With bipartisan backing, Congress appears likely to increase NIH budget yet again

<https://www.spectrumnews.org>

<https://www.statnews.com/2018/06/26/congress-nih-budget-increase/>

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