

SPOTTED

Spotted: Bad review; good business

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WEEK OF MAY 4TH

Bad review

PLoS One has **ousted a peer reviewer** for making sexist comments to two female researchers. The reviewer, whose name and gender are unknown, suggested the researchers find **“one or two male biologists to work with”** to help guard against “interpretations that may sometimes be drifting too far away from empirical evidence.” The review sparked a **firestorm on Twitter** last week, with the journal **chiming in** that it “regrets the tone, content and spirit of this review.”

Good business

An op-ed published 5 May in *Forbes* describes **the success of several businesses** that employ people with autism. “Innovative employment programs that focus on individuals with special needs can turn out some of the most diligent, dependable and productive employees,” wrote Robert Szczerba, a *Forbes* contributor and technology executive whose 10-year-old son has autism. The piece highlights the impressive growth of **Extraordinary Ventures**, an organization based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, that employs 40 people with autism or other developmental disorders.

Microbe mania

“You are mostly not you.” That’s the take-home message of the new book **“Follow Your Gut: The Enormous Impact of Tiny Microbes.”** Written by **Rob Knight**, director of the Microbiome Initiative at the University of California, San Diego, the book explores the many functions of the trillions of microbes that inhabit our bodies. Some **studies have even linked** these single-cell squatters to autism. “Far from being inert passengers, these little organisms play essential roles in the most fundamental processes of our lives, including digestion, immune responses, and even behavior,” Knight writes.

Meeting of the minds

More than 2,000 researchers will gather in Salt Lake City, Utah, next week for the **International Meeting for Autism Research** (IMFAR). Among the many hot topics slated for discussion are the genetics of the disorder, the search for biomarkers and the biological roots of the mysterious gender bias. Francesca Happé[^], president of the International Society for Autism Research, outlines some of the meeting's most **noteworthy sessions** in her blog on *Live Science*. Our steadfast team of reporters will be there to bring you all the latest. Stay tuned!
