



10 October 2018

An update from our Director

We hope that you and your family have been having a wonderful summer.

I am often asked why we need to study the human brain to understand autism. Can't we just study mice brains and figure out what is different in autism?

There are many answers to this question. At a global level, it is clear that the human brain is not simply a scaled-up mouse brain. There are many parts of the human brain that are absent or very primitive in rodents such as the mouse. As it turns out, regions of the so-called frontal lobe show the most striking differences between mouse and human brains. This is important because the frontal lobe is critically important in social behavior and executive function which are often impaired in autism. So, it may be that the parts of the brain that are altered in autism don't even exist in the mouse brain!

[Please click here to read the rest of the director's letter.](#)

OUTREACH UPDATE



A message from Lilliam Acosta-Sanchez, Autism BrainNet Outreach Manager

I am delighted to be part of the Autism BrainNet

team and this caring community. The last four months have been filled with discovery, team spirit, dedication and support. I could not be more grateful. I hope these same values come through our work and what we are trying to accomplish. We invite you to be part of this journey.

In every issue of the newsletter we highlight new findings relevant to autism that have been made possible by

postmortem brain research. Check out the science section below for more information. We are also are gearing up to participate in Autism Speaks walks between now and the end of the year. Follow us on [Facebook](#) to see if Autism BrainNet will be in your community.

We encourage you to help us spread the word about Autism BrainNet in your community and social spaces. Learn more about Autism BrainNet and stay connected. If you have questions or need additional information, visit us at [autismbrainnet.org](#) or [takesbrains.org](#), or send us an email at info@autismbrainnet.org.

HOTLINE

Contact us, we are here to help.



If you have questions about Autism BrainNet and the donation process, email us at:

info@autismbrainnet.org

If you have questions about making a donation, call our 24 hour hotline: **1-877-333-0999**

SCIENCE

Sleep, the brain and autism

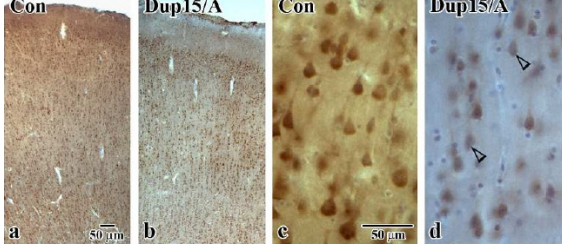


New brain tissue research may explain why many children and adults with autism have sleep problems.

[Learn more here.](#)

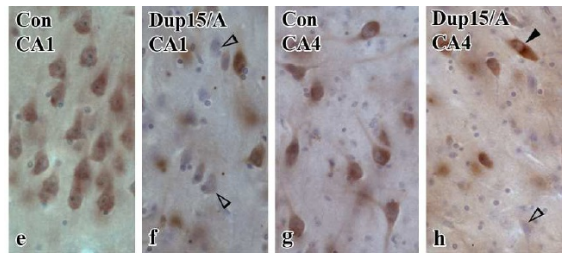
Getty Images

Some shared characteristics of Fragile X and autism



Autism BrainNet research reveals common pathway between autism types.

[Learn more here.](#)



Images of the frontal cortex stained for the FMRP protein. Courtesy: Jarek Wegiel

In case you missed it

Although there is substantial evidence from neuroimaging studies, little is known about the underlying cellular, molecular and genetic mechanisms that lead to the onset of autistic symptoms. On Wednesday, October 10th David Amaral, Ph.D., Director of Autism BrainNet joined the Autism Research Institute and presented on advances in brain tissue donation and research.

[Watch a recording of the presentation here.](#)

FAMILY MEETINGS

Phelan-McDermid syndrome families unite to understand autism.



Dr. Alycia Halladay (left) and
PMS Board Member Megan O'Boyle (right)

In July, hundreds of families living with Phelan-McDermid syndrome (also called PMS) came together in Dallas, Texas to discuss challenges, receive genetic counseling, and participate in research. Dr. Alycia Halladay, CSO of the Autism Science Foundation, discussed research findings using resources from Autism BrainNet and their impact on our understanding of autism to PMS families. Watch the [presentation](#) to learn more.

Most people with PMS also have an autism diagnosis. Learn more about PMS .

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thanks for visiting.

Thanks to all the individuals and families that came out to support the autism community and Autism BrainNet.



Lots of helping hands for the many folks who came to Autism Speaks Walk in New York City on September 16!



The Autism BrainNet team thanks all the autism families who took part in Autism Speaks Walk in Seattle on September 22!



The Autism BrainNet team was fortunate to meet so many superheroes at the Autism Speaks Jersey Shore Walk on September 22!



Kelly Gleason from the UT Southwestern Medical Center node and supermom ambassador Jill Briesch were excited to talk about the work of Autism BrainNet in Dallas for the Autism Speaks Walk on September 29!



<https://autismbrainnet.org> | <https://takesbrains.org>