New mouse model mimics autism

Authors: Brian Perez Christina Flores Kyle Guzman Charles Rogers Jessica Richardson

Published Date: 02-17-2017

Alaska Pacific University

School of Cognitive Science

A new mouse model that mimics autism as part of a growing body of research using mice is being published in the December 24th issue of PNAS. Following are the details of the research (from our Reutersâ€™ colleague!).

A team of scientists at The Stanley Medical Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, has generated a mouse model of the pervasive developmental disorder, or ASD. The model relies on an altered gene to allow sensory-motor connections in the brain to connect with sensory senses, such as touch, and spatial navigation, which are affected in autism. It also fits into the current biomedical model of autism, in which problems with communication and social skills are at the heart of the disorder.

â€œWeâ€™ve been able to create a mouse model with a high sensitivity to the deficits of autism,â€ said David Hallam, a professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine and the instituteâ€™s director. â€œSo we can now use these mice to study other aspects of the disorder that canâ€™t be studied in a mouse or have not been studied in other studies.â€

The researchers recruited mice with a defect that causes brain abnormalities called ventromedial temporal myopathy, a condition that affects more than 60,000 people in the United States and involves problems with the processing of sensory information from sensory nerves in the temporal lobe of the brain. By altering the DNA in the patientâ€™s cells, they were able to create a mouse model of the disorder that showed strong behavioral abnormalities in this area.

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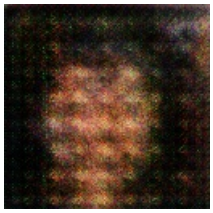
You can also visit their website and see a video about the research.

Mojca Jez Bets on PTN is writing about science and in love. For more information please contact her at mojcomp2@gmail.com and follow her on twitter at twitter.com/mojcareen



A Red Fire Hydrant Sitting In The Middle Of A Forest