Translating Scientific Research in Autism into Clinical Practice

Editorial and study series published in Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry addresses ‘translation gap’

Washington D.C., December 5, 2012 – An editorial published in the November 2012 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP) discusses the challenge of translating scientific research in autism into clinical practice, and presents a series of studies published over several months that address this ‘translation gap’.

The translation gap, or the ‘Valley of Death,’ is a twofold challenge: first, translating the findings of laboratory research into a diagnostic test or method of intervention, which then must itself be studied, and second, using the information derived from evaluations of the new test or method to effect changes in patient care.

Tasked with bringing fresh, clinically relevant autism research to JAACAP, Editorial Board members Peter Szatmari, Tony Charman, and John N. Constantino solicited articles that, “bridge the translations gap… by describing methodologically rigorous, newsworthy, and… clinically relevant scientific contributions,” in the area of autism research. The resulting articles, published throughout 2012, address such topics as gender differences in the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), biomarkers for ASD, developmental trajectories and daily living skills, caregiver burden, and evaluations of several intervention and screening models.

Lead author Dr. Peter Szatmari said of the autism series, “Translational science requires a different paradigm than traditional research and these articles provide an exciting insight into what is possible when we take that challenge seriously.”


Notes for editors
Full text of the article is available to credentialed journalists upon request; contact Mary Billingsley at +1 202 966 7300 x105 or mbillingsley@jaacap.org. Journalists wishing to interview the authors may contact Peter Szatmari at szatmar@mcmaster.ca.

All articles published in JAACAP are embargoed until 3PM ET of the day they are published as corrected proofs online. Articles cannot be publicized as accepted abstracts. Contents of the publication should not be released to or by the media or government agencies before this date.

About JAACAP
Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP) is the official publication of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. JAACAP is the leading journal focusing exclusively on today’s psychiatric research and treatment of the child and adolescent. Published twelve times per year, each issue is committed to its mission of advancing the science of pediatric mental health and promoting the care of youth and their families.

The journal’s purpose is to advance research, clinical practice, and theory in child and adolescent psychiatry. It is interested in manuscripts from diverse viewpoints, including genetic, epidemiological,
neurobiological, cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, social, cultural, and economic. Studies of diagnostic reliability and validity, psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacological treatment efficacy, and mental health services effectiveness are encouraged. The journal also seeks to promote the well-being of children and families by publishing scholarly papers on such subjects as health policy, legislation, advocacy, culture and society, and service provision as they pertain to the mental health of children and families.

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