

# Unraveling the Genetics of Autism



Lauren A. Weiss

Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Institute for Human Genetics

## CURRENT RESEARCH

### Identifying preventative measures for symptoms of autism

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism affects 1 in 68 children in the US. Unfortunately, families affected by autism have few treatment options. Thus, by understanding what is happening at a genetic and neurodevelopmental level, researchers will be able to more accurately diagnose and develop more effective treatments. Dr. Lauren Weiss, of the University of California, San Francisco, studies genetic risk factors for autism to identify preventative measures to reduce the disabilities associated with autism. She and her team look beyond simple models of autism, and seek to understand autism on a fundamental level to one day help treat the thousands of people and families affected by it each year. In concentrating on the complicated genetic mechanisms of autism, Dr. Weiss and her team break down the genetic components and environmental factors that may one day shed light on an effective way to reduce the symptoms of autism.

The strength of Dr. Weiss' research falls upon the strong focus on autism, unique genetic approaches to challenging problems, and the breadth of the laboratory which includes everything from recruiting families to participate in research to analyzing large genetic datasets, to functional studies in induced pluripotent stem cells. Having the full spectrum of research in the same lab broadens the understanding, expertise, and creative resources of the group. In addition, perhaps as inspiring as the hope that her research brings to the future for individuals with autism and their families, is the passion Dr. Weiss has for her work. She describes, "I still get a surge of excitement because I feel really lucky to be working in this area!"

Current research...

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## AFFILIATION



University Of California, San Francisco

## EDUCATION

- B.S., in Human Genetics, 2001 , University of Michigan
- Ph.D., in Human Genetics, 2005 , The University of Chicago
- Fellow, Psychiatric Genetics, 2008 , Harvard Medical School

## AWARDS

- Staglin Family Assistant Professorship, 2008
- AAMC Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar, 2009
- NIH Director's New Innovator Award, 2010
- NARSAD Young Investigator Award, 2010
- Coro Leadership Collaborative Program, 2012

## RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Genomics / Congenital, Neurological / Cognitive, Stem Cell

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Lauren Weiss, of the University of California, San Francisco, as she studies the genetic risk factors for autism. Donations will support the necessary \$500K-\$1M required to support personnel, equipment, and stem cell costs. In choosing to donate, you will play a role in identifying a preventative measures and for future therapeutics for patients with autism.