A Precision Medicine Approach to Diagnosing and Treating Autism

Karen J. Parker, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, directs the Social Neurosciences Research Program. Dr. Parker's multidisciplinary team is comprised of postdoctoral fellows with expertise in social behavior, molecular biology, bioengineering, neuroscience, and also includes a neuroscience graduate student, multiple undergraduates, a lab manager, research coordinators, and technicians. With her team, and in close collaboration with a biostatistician and several clinicians, she is pioneering the development of novel primate models that have behavioral and biological features with direct relevance to human autism. In patients, her research aims to identify novel biological “signatures” of autism in human fluids, test promising new medications that improve social abilities, and identify biological predictors of treatment response to determine which children will benefit most from a given medication. Dr. Parker’s research program has high potential to rapidly advance scientific knowledge and transform clinical practice. Findings from her research will help to:

- Develop novel diagnostic tools.
- Test promising new medications that improve social abilities in people with autism.
- Train the next generation of autism researchers.

Dr. Parker’s transformative research program which aims to better understand: 1) the biology of social functioning and autism disease biology; 2) develop novel diagnostic tools; 3) test promising new medications to improve social abilities in people with autism; and 4) train the next generation of autism researchers. Donations will be used to underwrite Dr. Parker’s annual research operating costs. Play a role in detecting and curing autism; fund Dr. Parker.

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