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WELCOME TO THE ESPA RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

A very warm welcome to issue 3 of the ESPA Research Newsletter – the one-stop service dedicated to providing updates & information about all things ESPA Research. We hope that you enjoy reading about our various activities. If you have any comments / questions / queries about this newsletter or our research, please do not hesitate to contact us & let us know.

Many thanks & enjoy.

ESPA Research

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BUSY TIMES

Time certainly does fly. October 2010 marked the first anniversary of ESPA Research. There was little time to take stock of our various achievements throughout our first year as work continued at a pace. In this issue we report on a number of promising projects that have either been extended or newly conceived with the hope of improving quality of life for people with autism spectrum and related conditions. Further publications, both peer-reviewed and in the popular press have also been produced with details of how to download the open-access papers provided on our website.

Alongside a report on our October conference held in Sunderland, UK, ESPA Research members also took part in a number of other meetings including the World Autism Organisation (WAO) Congress in Mexico, a British Psychological Society (BPS) meeting in Durham, UK and sessions for the local NAS branch in Cambridge, UK. Further details about ESPA Research are on our website:

www.espa-research.org.uk

CONFERENCE REPORT

Our one-day conference titled '**Diet intervention in autism spectrum conditions**' was held on Wednesday 6 October 2010 at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, UK. The conference focussed on various dietary and nutritional strategies being used to either positively affect developmental outcome in autism or improve quality of life.

Our range of speakers covered both dietetic and nutritional perspectives mixing research and practice alongside expertise in areas of biology and biochemistry. We attracted a wide range of people including people with autism and their families as well as various social and healthcare professionals. The message was balanced and positive: some people with autism may benefit from dietary and nutritional support, others may not. The major challenge now is to identify characteristics and markers for those who may benefit most. Selected presentations are available for free download on the ESPA Research website.



Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.



Members from ESPA Research also presented at several other recent events. Paul Shattock attended the 3rd World Autism Congress in Monterrey, Mexico. Alongside presenting at the Congress and various other events in the region, Paul was installed as President of the World Autism Organisation (WAO). ESPA Research extends its warmest congratulations to Paul on his appointment.

Paul Whiteley presented at the 3rd annual conference of the North East of England Branch of the British Psychological Society in October. Attendees heard Paul discuss research on dietary intervention for autism spectrum conditions and details of the group results from the ScanBrit dietary project examining the use of a gluten- and casein-free (GFCF) dietary intervention.

Lynda Todd gave a series of talks at the Cambridge branch of the National Autistic Society (NAS) in November. Lynda presented on the use of dietary intervention alongside discussions on the practicalities of a change in diet.



IN PRINT

As part of our continuing efforts to undertake and publish high-quality research and opinion into various facets of autism spectrum conditions, ESPA Research announces the publication of several new articles.

In December, we published a paper in the peer-reviewed journal *Autism Insights* titled: **How could a gluten- and casein-free diet ameliorate symptoms associated with autism spectrum conditions?** The paper will be free to

download via the ESPA Research website and comprehensively details the various mechanisms through which a GFCF diet might work for some people with autism spectrum conditions. In October, Paul Shattock published an article titled: **The ScanBrit diet study: an executive summary** in the *Autism File* (vol.37). In this article, Paul demystifies the “science” speak to summarise the main findings and limitations of our collaborative research project examining the potential effects of a GFCF diet for autism. Several other manuscripts from ESPA Research are being drafted as we speak with further information to follow in future newsletters.

QTOF UPDATE

Ongoing method development in urine analysis picks up a pace. A new method for the quick analysis of amino acids has been developed. Normal amino acid analysis is very labour intensive; our method requires very little preparation and less than 15 minute analysis time. We are now working on a comprehensive test for over one hundred compounds, including all the organic acids and other Autism specific compounds. Once this has been developed we will be able to undertake a full screening of dietary markers to help us understand the possible link between ASC and diet.



At work in the laboratory.

RESEARCH CONTINUES

ESPA Research is delighted to announce the continuation of our ScanBrit collaboration and the start of several new research projects in the New Year.

Following notification from our Scandinavian partners, the ScanBrit group will start work next year on the next phase of our studies looking at the effectiveness of a GFCF diet for autism. Research details are still under discussion although may be examining



important questions on the physical effects of diet and suggestions for criteria for best- and non response to intervention. Several new collaborative projects are also in the early discussion stages including:

- (i) Studies on the potential biological basis to colour therapy for people with autism and related conditions;
- (ii) An examination of any link between the use of GFCF diet and epilepsy / seizure –type conditions;
- (iii) Investigations on the effects of employment on people with high-functioning autism and/or Asperger syndrome in collaboration with autismworks.

Funding is currently being sought for these and other investigations. Future newsletters will provide any available updates on these important projects.

AND FINALLY...

The investigations carried out by ESPA Research only continue as a result of the kind generosity of donated funds from individuals and groups. We are eternally grateful for all donations received whether big or small. All donated money goes directly to our various research projects on autism spectrum & related conditions. ESPA Research is a not-for-profit venture. Further details on how to donate to ESPA Research including future donations through virginmoneygiving.com are shown on our website: www.espa-research.org.uk

Thank you.