

Research Study Summary

“Neurobiologic and Cognitive Mechanism of Autism”

Currently, we are conducting two studies on autism. Our aim in conducting studies of individuals with autism and their family members is to develop a better understanding of the disorder, so as a field we can develop better approaches for early detection and treatment of autism.

Study 1

We are looking for individuals, between the ages of 8 and 55, who are diagnosed with, or likely to have, either autism or Asperger’s syndrome. Participants need to have at least a second grade reading level. The study requires a clinical evaluation to confirm a diagnosis, and then paper/pencil and computerized tests of memory, attention, and motor skills. We also use eye movement testing to assess attention and motor skills, which require participants to follow the movement of dots on a screen. Small electrodes are placed around participants’ eyes to record their eye movements. These electrodes merely feel like stickers. In addition, participants may have the opportunity to get a MRI scan. MRI enables us to not only look at a detailed picture of the brain, but also to see the brain at work while participants complete tasks in the scanner. For MRI studies, participants cannot have any metal devices or fragments in their bodies to go into the MRI, and they have to be able to remain still for a good part of a hour.

Study 2

We are looking for individuals, between the ages of 0-55, diagnosed with autism. We ask individuals with autism, and their family members, to participate in laboratory studies of thinking, memory and attention. Even if individuals with autism are too young or unable to complete the tests, we still are interested in testing family members. Our aim is to find patterns of cognitive styles and abilities that run in families of individuals with autism. We also are working to see if these styles are related to genetic factors (examined by looking at DNA from a blood sample), and to subtle psychological characteristics of autism such as social anxieties and sometimes rigid personal preferences. Family members between the ages of 8 and 55 are recruited for these psychological studies. Study 2 does not include a MRI scan.

For some general information on what it is like to be a participant please visit:
<http://ccm.psych.uic.edu/VolunteerForStudy/ResearchVolunteers/WhatsItLike.aspx>

STARTS APPROVAL EXPIRES
APR 19 2009 TO APR 18 2010

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD