The Simons Center for the Social Brain announces the Autism and Developmental Disorders Colloquium Series at MIT:

"Linguistic and cognitive profiles in autism and the broad autism phenotype"
Molly Losh, Ph.D.
Jane Steiner Hoffman and Michael Hoffman Assistant Professor, Northwestern University

6:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 7, 2012
MIT Building 46-3002 (auditorium), followed by a reception
Building Address: 43 Vassar Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

Hosted by Kenneth N. Wexler, Ph.D., Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, MIT

Please RSVP to lmavros@mit.edu

Evidence for the genetic basis of autism comes from twin and family studies showing strong heritability and familiality, respectively. Further, genetic liability appears to be expressed among unaffected relatives of people with autism through very subtle features that are qualitatively similar to the defining characteristics of autism. Yet little is known about the neural systems and the cognitive processes that mediate either the autism phenotype, or the "Broad Autism Phenotype" in relatives. Do they feature impairments in the same underlying neuropsychological systems? Are there specific language and cognitive profiles that characterize these phenotypes? And how might such features facilitate gene-finding studies? This talk will describe findings from family-study and cross-population research aimed to address these questions. Evidence will be presented suggesting that language is an important target for linking phenotype to cognitive process to brain structure in autism, and may ultimately provide insights into genes involved in autism, and related to language and cognitive processes in typical development.

The Simons Center for the Social Brain Colloquium Series is a continuation of the Autism and Developmental Disorders Colloquium Series at MIT

For more information on the Simons Center, including future talks, see: http://web.mit.edu/scsb/

Coming up …

"Recurrence, Resilience, Aggregation, and Intergenerational Transmission: Reconciling family studies with gene discovery in autism"

John N. Constantino, MD
Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Washington University School of Medicine
6:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 21, 2012