Environmental Factors in the Etiology of Autism

Is autism caused by genes or the environment? By toxins affecting the nervous system or by immune system dysfunction? Or all of the above? Dr. Isaac Pessah of the University of California Davis is doing exciting research on how environmental toxins translate into altered biology, and how this is related to the characteristics of autism. We are thrilled that he is traveling to Pasadena to address our group.

There is growing concern from both parents and health professionals that exposure to environmental toxicants may act synergistically with unidentified genetic susceptibility factors to produce autistic spectrum disorders. The UC Davis Center for Children’s Environmental Health is working to identify and understand environmental, immunologic and genetic risk factors for autism. Research is being conducted with the goal of defining common mechanisms in immune and neural cells that result in toxic effects of environmental agents, contributing to the incidence and severity of childhood autism.

Isaac Pessah, Ph.D., is Professor of Toxicology in the Department of Molecular Biosciences and is a member of the Center for Neuroscience and the M.I.N.D. Institute. He is currently Chair of the Graduate Program in Pharmacology and Toxicology, and Director of the NIEHS Center for Children’s Environmental Health and Disease Prevention. In the seventeen years that he has been at the University of California, Davis, Dr. Pessah has developed collaborative and interdisciplinary research program with colleagues in the Schools of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, and Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is a senior member of the NIEHS Center of Excellence in Toxicology (Leader of the Neurotoxicology Research Core) and the Superfund Basic Research Program. Dr Pessah is on the Editorial board of The Journal of Neurotoxicology.

When: Wednesday, January 13, 2010
Networking 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Speakers 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Where: Pasadena Child Development Associates (PCDA)
620 North Lake Avenue, 2nd floor
Pasadena, CA 91101
(Just north of the 210 Freeway)

PCDA is not affiliated with the Foothill Autism Alliance but has graciously allowed the use of its facility. All topics and speakers are presented for informational purposes and do not constitute an endorsement of any intervention, therapy, or treatment.

Unfortunately, childcare is not available at Resource Meetings. Out of respect for the speaker and fellow attendees, please do not bring any young children.