

December 2021 REPORT



Research.  
Support.  
Empowerment.



AUTISM RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
*Autism is Treatable*

## 2021 Accomplishments

We work every day to provide the research, education, and support for people with autism.

### Research: ARI's Dedication Continues

#### Research Grants - \$300,000

In 2021, ARI awarded more than \$300,000 in grants to fund innovative research that holds realistic promise in impacting the lives of those on the autism spectrum. Since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, we have been helping many of our colleagues worldwide adjust their research plans so they can continue their efforts with minimal interruptions.

#### Scientific Advisory Board

Our Scientific Advisory Board attracts leading researchers in all areas related directly or indirectly to understanding the underlying biology of autism. Advisory board members provide crucial support for ARI's rigorous grant review process, participate in our near-weekly webinars, share their latest research findings, and contribute to our library of articles.

#### Global Research Network

ARI began a global researcher network earlier this year with the aim to keep researchers up to date with the latest news in the scientific community; this includes sharing articles on conducting research, informing them of various funding sources, and notifying them of the latest studies published in peer-reviewed journals.

#### Scientific Meetings and Think Tanks

ARI held its first-ever, online, multi-day, scientific meeting in 2021 featuring researchers sharing updates on a variety of topics including gastrointestinal issues and emerging metabolic findings. We are planning now for our in-person think tanks to resume in April 2022.

#### Supporting Researchers

We provide researchers with guidance on how to optimize their experimental designs, and help them recruit participants for their studies. ARI assists two tissue banks: a brain tissue bank for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the University of Maryland and a gastrointestinal biorepository at the Digestive Function Laboratory Repository at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

#### Autism Research Review International

We continue to publish our quarterly science newsletter, *Autism Research Review International* (ARRI), reporting on current medical, sensory, and educational research.

#### New Book on Sleep in Autism

We recently completed a multidisciplinary book on understanding and treating sleep disturbances associated with autism. The book will be published early next year (2022). Contributors include leading experts in challenging behaviors, medicine, neurology, nutrition, and sensory processing.

### 2021 Research Grant Recipients

#### Research that makes a difference!

ARI conducts, sponsors and supports research on the underlying causes of and treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our founder Dr. Bernard Rimland would often say, "Research that makes a difference!" to remind us of the need to focus on what might be beneficial for people with ASD here and now.

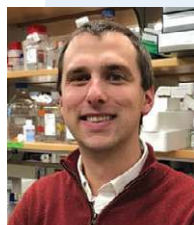
Highlighted here are examples of research studies ARI funded in 2021. For a complete list please visit: [autism.org/ari-funded-research-studies-2021](https://autism.org/ari-funded-research-studies-2021)



#### Natalia Battista, PhD

*University of Teramo  
Faculty of Bioscience and Technology  
for Food, Agriculture and Environment*

**Cross-talk between food-borne  
Lactiplantibacillus (Lpb.) plantarum  
and the endocannabinoid system  
towards Autism Spectrum Disorder**



#### Evan Bordt, PhD

*Massachusetts General Hospital*

**The role of male-specific perinatal  
sex hormones in the development  
of sex-biased mitochondrial and  
social behavioral dysregulation**



#### Yuri Bozzi, PhD

*University of Trento  
CIMeC  
Center for Mind/Brain Sciences*

**Targeting cerebellar inflammation  
to improve autism-related behaviors  
in Shank3b mutant mice, a model  
of Autism Spectrum Disorder**



#### Tal Laviv, PhD

*Tel Aviv University*

**Development of a biosensor for  
visualization of PTEN activity  
in the brain**

ation, and treatment advocacy that is urgently needed.

## Continuing Medical Education

### Accessible learning opportunities

ARI released a **new series of continuing education talks on epilepsy and autism spectrum disorders** during the summer of 2021. Offered in joint providership with the Cleveland Clinic, the series provides complimentary *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* and ABIM MOC points to physicians and is available for viewing by the general public. Connecting physicians to improved standards of care is crucial to amplifying understanding of the medical nature of the disorder.

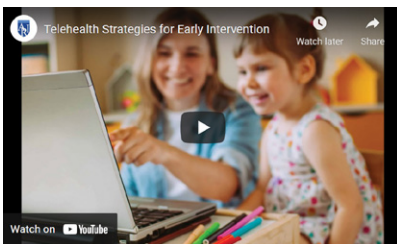
Learn more online at [ARI-CME.org](http://ARI-CME.org)

## Educational Webinars

### Free live and recorded content

ARI hosted **twice-monthly live webinars** featuring top researchers and treatment professionals. Topics included research updates, diet, nutrition, behavioral support, assessment, educational therapies, adult issues, and more.

**ARI's YouTube channel** offers free access to all of our content: presentations by top experts with up-to-date webcasts on medical support and educational videos, social stories, and talks from past conferences. **Users have tuned in for more than 750,00 viewings.**



## Covid-19 Programming

### Offering support to navigate unprecedented times

Disruptions to personal and professional lives, schedule changes, and school closings continued to present unique challenges for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families, as well as research professionals and clinicians throughout 2021. As students returned to school and travel and holidays resumed, we worked to provide webinars and social stories with helpful updates for coping with these ongoing changes.



## Outreach

### Outreach in the U.S.:

#### Providing personal support and resources

ARI offers personal support and resources to parents, caregivers, and professionals.

We sponsor a **telephone support line** for parents and caregivers seeking information.

We provide an opportunity for **viewers of our live webinars to ask questions directly to the presenters.**

We moderate **internet discussion groups** for parents.

### International Outreach:

#### Embracing the global autism community

Last year, ARI began **networking with support groups worldwide.** The goal of the network is to improve communication among support groups and inform the international community about the current science regarding the underlying biology of ASD and evidence-based treatments. There are currently 222 support group members located in 77 different countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Croatia, Egypt, Hungary, Israel, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, Uganda, Venezuela, Vietnam.

**ARI is an NGO** (non-governmental organization) of the United Nations. ARI continues to translate many of our key articles and our Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC), now available in 25 languages.

## E-Newsletters

### Sharing information for everyone in the autism community

**ARI's monthly e-newsletter keeps nearly 140,000 subscribers up-to-date** on new resources and the latest research.

**ARI also publishes a bimonthly e-newsletter, *Clinical Research in Autism*,** for more than 10,000 obstetricians, pediatricians, and nurses who want to keep current with research relevant to their practice.

## ARI Touches Lives



Lucas is 4 years old and was diagnosed when he was just 1 year, 5 months. He has been doing therapies, has responded very well, and is fully included in a regular classroom in school. He is lovely and sociable, and very intelligent.

**Most importantly: he is a very happy child.”**

— ANA CLAUDIA D. S. DE FIGUEIREDO  
Brazil



When my son was first diagnosed, I was told that he would never be able to read, write or understand anything, but I always had faith in him. Although it was a difficult road, I did everything possible to help him meet his challenges. In 2016, he graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A. in History, with honors. In addition, he holds two Master’s Degrees and is a Civil War historian who publishes regularly in the fields of American History and autism/disability studies. He also established, along with one of his professors, an advocacy organization for students on the spectrum.

**Never let anyone tell you what your child can or cannot do, or let a disability define them. I am so proud of my son as he continues to shine, and demonstrate that an autism diagnosis never stopped him from achieving what he wanted to achieve.”**

— RENEE SKUDRA  
North Carolina



We had tough times with our son’s first 7-8 years, with sleep issues, hyperactivity and limited understanding of dangers in daily life. ARI helped us by sharing new research and webinars. He is not 100% free from autism today, but is much better than in those early years. He is 20 years old now, speaks three languages (yet couldn’t speak before age 8), very interested in and excels at history, is a brown belt in karate, and can learn new things.

**We still have very much to do, but we have hope and know that progress is possible. I am very thankful to ARI for being there for us.”**

— YESIM SÖDERLUND  
Sweden



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**Connect with ARI!**

f AutismResearchInstitute  
t @ARIConference



For 2021, ARI earned  
**Guidestar’s Platinum  
Seal of Transparency**