

Dear Fellow Parent and Adults with ASD,

I want to tell you about a new area of research derived from technical breakthroughs of California researchers. Dr. Philip Schwartz at the Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) has been successful in establishing nerve cell cultures from tiny sections of **post mortem brain tissue** of donors with Rett and fragile X syndromes. The Autism Tissue Program would like to have a similar research resource from brain donors with autism.

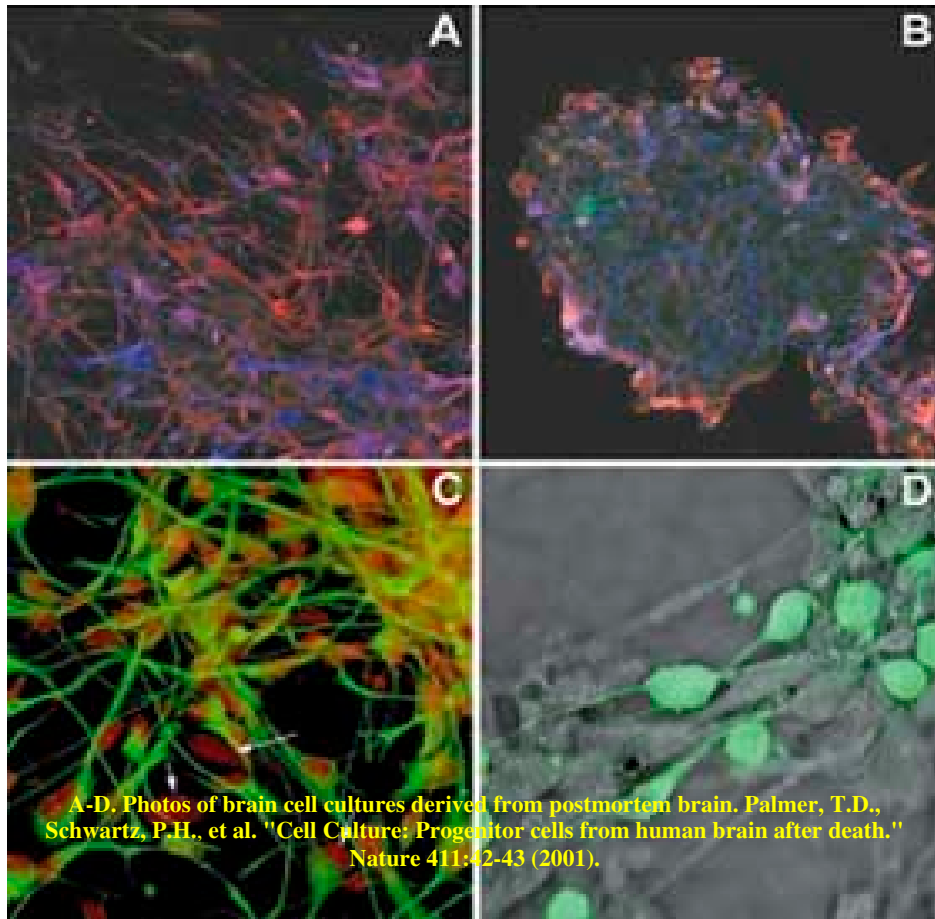
The opportunity to study autism donor-derived brain cells in culture would bring brain tissue research to new levels by defining the biochemical and genetic mechanisms of brain cell development and maturation. I want to note that this process does not use embryos as a source of tissue; these cells will mature to the various types of brain cells with the addition of specific growth factors. Cells would be available for study by an unlimited number of scientists for studies to understand how this disorder affects the brain. This resource would provide the first opportunity to examine treatment strategies on living cells since replicate dishes of cells can be used to test targeted therapeutic drugs. The rest of the donated brain becomes part of the neuropathology resource of the Autism Tissue Program for studies by investigators worldwide.

As the mother of a beloved son with autism, I experience the ongoing anxiety, frustration and stress of dealing with autism. As difficult as it is for my family to confront the possibility death for him, we decided that if the time comes, his brain will be donated for research. Our family made this decision to try in some small way to help unlock the mystery of autism for children. I urge you to consider brain donation for research too.

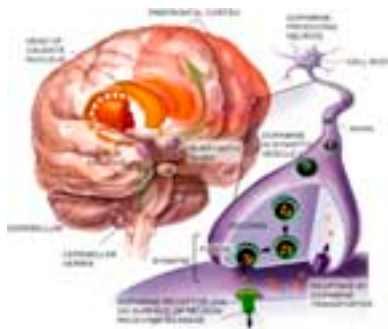
To plan to donate brain tissue in the event of death, please register online at www.MemoriesofHope.org or call the Autism Tissue Program at 1-877-333-0999. Family members in southern California will be put in contact with Dr. Schwartz who will make all the necessary arrangements for brain donation. It is important to note that donating the brain will not interfere with any funeral arrangements, including viewing. The Autism Tissue Program will cover expenses related to the donation. If you have questions about post mortem neural progenitor cells, please call the Autism Tissue Program at 877-333-0999 and ask for Connie.

Brain donation is a highly personal decision that has the power to accelerate research and transform the lives of countless families affected by autism. I wish you and your families well.

Sincerely, Connie Frenzel RN MS
Autism Tissue Program Outreach Coordinator



CHOC—Children’s Hospital of Orange County—has a special research program to collect neural progenitor cells after brain donation. Tissue samples removed from the brain after death can be grown in culture and stimulated to differentiate into various cells for research. Neural cells have already been derived from Rett syndrome and Fragile X brain donors at CHOC and given to researchers. The Autism Tissue Program encourages the Southern CA autism community to sign up now.



Living neurons and glial cells derived from donated brain tissue provide an unlimited number of researchers a chance to study cell growth and genetic patterns in culture. This process has been successful for Fragile X and Rett at CHOC; autism brain cell cultures also provide a system to test therapeutic drug responses.