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## Joseph Buxbaum Elected to National Academy of Medicine

Joseph D. Buxbaum, PhD, Professor and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, has been elected as one of 80 new members to the prestigious National Academy of Medicine (NAM), formerly known as The Institute of Medicine (IOM). A world-renowned molecular geneticist and neurobiologist, he is also the Director of the Seaver Autism Center for Research and Treatment at Mount Sinai.

“Election to the National Academy of Medicine is considered one of the highest honors in medicine,” says Dennis S. Charney, MD, the Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean of



Joseph D. Buxbaum, PhD

the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. “Dr. Buxbaum’s election is a notable achievement and well-deserved recognition of his leadership and important contributions to uncovering the genetic and molecular basis of autism spectrum disorder.”

Dr. Buxbaum’s research focuses on using techniques of molecular genetics and neuroscience to identify and characterize genes that contribute to autism susceptibility. His laboratory has identified common and rare genetic variants that underlie autism and has developed model systems in which novel therapeutics can be tested. This work has led to novel clinical trials in rare genetic disorders associated with autism. As the founder and co-leader of the Autism Sequencing Consortium, he heads an international group of scientists who share autism samples, data and ideas in order to accelerate our understanding of the causes of and treatments for autism.

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## Alex Kolevzon Promoted to Full Professor

Congratulations to Alex Kolevzon, MD, on his promotion to full Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics. Dr. Kolevzon began his time at Mount Sinai as a resident in 2000, and he went on to complete his fellowship training here in child and adolescent psychiatry. He has stayed at Mount Sinai, and he is now the Clinical Director of the Seaver Autism Center and the Director of the Child Behavioral Health and Science Center. Dr. Kolevzon’s research interests pertain to understand-

ing the neurobiology of autism and developing novel therapeutics.

Dr. Kolevzon leads the Experimental Therapeutics Program at the Seaver Autism Center, which conducts studies that range from small pilot trials to multi-centered pivotal FDA studies, and are funded internally, through industry, and through the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Kolevzon also leads a study on Phelan-McDermid syndrome as part of the national Rare Disease Clinical

Research Consortium and is the Principal Investigator on the only clinical trial in the United States of a novel therapeutic in this rare disorder.



Alex Kolevzon, MD

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## Paige Siper Promoted to Chief Psychologist

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**P**aige M. Siper, PhD, was recently made the new Chief Psychologist of the Seaver Autism Center. She is an Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry and a Seaver Faculty Fellow. Dr. Siper graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science and earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Yeshiva University. She completed her clinical internship at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and was the recipient of an Autism Speaks Meixner Translational Research Postdoctoral Fellowship, which she completed here at the Seaver Center. Her research focuses on visual processing in children with idiopathic and single-gene forms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) using a type of brainwave measurement known as a Visual Evoked Potential (VEP). Dr. Siper is particularly interested in the integration of neural and behavioral findings in order to develop effective biomarkers that can be used to identify ASD subtypes, measure treatment response,



Paige M. Siper, PhD

and predict treatment responders. She also provides neuropsychological evaluations and individual therapy as part of the Seaver Center's Clinical Program. As Chief Psychologist, she is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Seaver Center's Clinical Research Program as they pertain to psychological assessment, regulatory requirements for training and supervision, and developing protocols to ensure the highest quality research standards are met. It is her goal to keep the Seaver Center at the forefront of novel diagnostic tools and evidenced-based treatments in order to provide all families with up-to-date knowledge and unparalleled care.

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## Buxbaum *Continued from page 1*

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Recruited in part to establish a molecular genetics program in autism, Dr. Buxbaum joined Mount Sinai in 1997 as Director of Molecular Genetics at the Seaver Autism Center. He took over Directorship of the Center in 2008. Dr. Buxbaum also leads Mount Sinai's Laboratory of Molecular Neuropsychiatry, which has taken the findings of the causes of neuropsychiatric disorders and translated them into animal models where therapeutic approaches can be evaluated.

Dr. Buxbaum earned his PhD from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neurosci-

ence at the Rockefeller University. He is an author on more than 200 publications, and he is co-editor in chief of the journal *Molecular Autism*.

New members to the NAM are elected by current active members through a selective process that recognizes people who have made major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care, and public health. Established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine is a national resource that provides independent, objective analysis and advice on health issues.

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## Kolevzon *Continued from page 1*

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As the Director of the Child Behavioral Health and Science Center, Dr. Kolevzon works to integrate interdisciplinary programs in child and adolescent psychiatry across the Mount Sinai Health System at the Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai St. Luke's, Mount Sinai West (formerly Mount Sinai Roosevelt), and Mount Sinai Beth Israel.

Dr. Kolevzon is a frequently invited speaker regionally, nation-

ally, and internationally and has published numerous papers on ASD. He is committed to medical student and residency education as an active teacher, mentor, and clinical supervisor. He has consistently won teaching and mentoring awards for the past 10 years and written several books designed for medical student and resident education in addition to co-editing the *Textbook of Autism Spectrum Disorders* published by American Psychiatric Publishing.

# Highlights from the 19th Annual Advances in Autism Conference

**O**n October 25, 2015, the Seaver Autism Center hosted the 19th Annual Advances in Autism Conference. The mixed audience of researchers, healthcare professionals, educators, and family members enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the latest findings in autism research. As in past years, the conference program included several scientific presenters, as well as multiple family members of people with autism.

Hirschell E. Levine, Esq., welcomed everyone to the conference, explained the history of the Seaver Autism Center, and introduced Joseph D. Buxbaum,

PhD, who presented on the role of basic research in the development of novel treatments for ASD.

In addition to scientific presentations by Dr. Buxbaum, Catherine Lord, PhD, and Avi Reichenberg, PhD, Jamie Roitman spoke about the Seaver Autism Center Associates Committee, a group of stakeholders committed to the Center, and how it relates to her life growing up with a sibling with autism. Alison Singer, President of the Autism Science Foundation, gave a moving Keynote Presentation about her experience in the field of autism and having an affected sibling

and daughter. A speaker panel discussion, moderated by Alex Kolevzon, MD, closed the program.

This year's conference was a rewarding experience for attendees and presenters alike. As noted by Dr. Buxbaum, "It is an honor to host this conference every year. As scientists, we are eager to share our findings with the community, and we welcome the important opportunity to join forces with families affected by autism."

In 2016 we are celebrating the 20th Annual Advances in Autism Conference – stay tuned for more information!



*19th Annual Advances in Autism Conference Speakers*



*"Opening Remarks" Hirschell E. Levine, Esq., Co-Trustee of the Seaver Foundation*



*"Can Basic Research Lead to Novel Treatments for ASD?"  
Joseph D. Buxbaum, PhD,  
Director of the Seaver Autism Center*



*Keynote Presentation:  
"Autism from Generation to Generation"  
Alison Singer, President of the Autism Science Foundation*



*"Regression and Early Development in Autism Spectrum Disorders"  
Catherine Lord, PhD, Director of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain*



*"Autism and the Environment"  
Avi Reichenberg, PhD,  
Professor of Psychiatry and Preventive Medicine at the Seaver Autism Center*



*"Seaver Autism Center Associates Committee  
Jamie Roitman, Sibling of an Adult with Autism*



*Speaker Panel Moderated by Alex Kolevzon, MD, Clinical Director of the Seaver Autism Center*



*Joseph Buxbaum, Alison Singer, Avi Reichenberg, Paige Siper, PhD, Chief Psychologist of the Seaver Autism Center*



**Mount  
Sinai**

*Seaver Autism  
Center for Research  
and Treatment*

Mount Sinai Medical Center  
One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1230, New York, NY 10029

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• **THE SEAVER AUTISM CENTER NEWSLETTER** brings you timely updates about new developments related to research and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, as well as activities at the Seaver Autism Center. To be placed on our mailing list, please contact [SeaverCenterEditor@mssm.edu](mailto:SeaverCenterEditor@mssm.edu) or The Seaver Autism Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1668, New York, NY 10029. Our phone number is 212.241.0961 and our website is [www.SeaverAutismCenter.org](http://www.SeaverAutismCenter.org).

• **SEAVER IS CONTINUING TO GO GREEN!** Please send your email address to [seavercentereditor@mssm.edu](mailto:seavercentereditor@mssm.edu) to receive this newsletter electronically.

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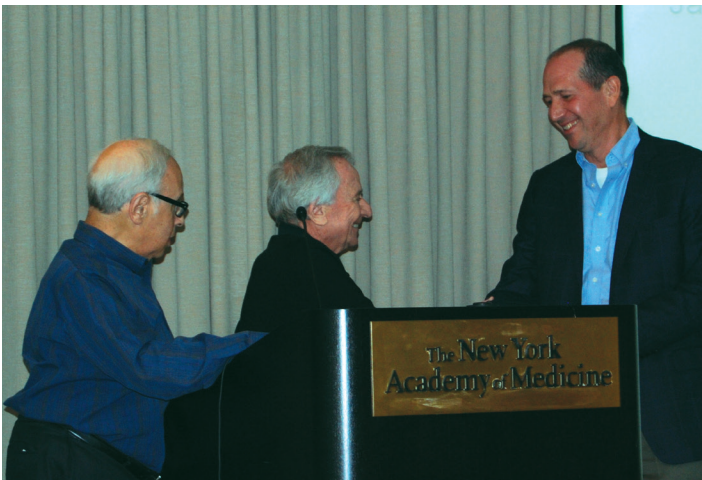
## Seaver Foundation Site Visit

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At the 2015 annual Seaver Foundation Site Visit this past November, the Trustees of the Beatrice and Samuel A. Seaver Foundation, Hirschell E. Levine, Esq., and John D. Cohen, Esq. graciously contributed \$1.225 million in addition to the Foundation's annual pledge and support of faculty, postdoctoral, and graduate Seaver Fellowships and Faculty Scholar Awards. As always, the Seaver Autism Center is extraordinarily grateful to the

Seaver Foundation for their unwavering support and generosity since the founding of the Center in 1993.

If you would like to support active research and programs at the Seaver Autism Center, please visit [www.seaverautismcenter.org](http://www.seaverautismcenter.org) or call 212-241-0961.



Mr. Levine and Mr. Cohen presenting Dr. Buxbaum with gift



L-R: Mr. Levine, Dr. Buxbaum, Mr. Cohen