Imaging-California Autism Twin Study (ICATS)
Frequently Asked Questions-FAQ

We hope that you and your family will take part in this new study of autism and twins. Below is some basic information about this study.

What are my children and I being invited to do? You and your twins are invited to take part in a study that looks at genetic and non-genetic factors of brain structure and chemistry (by using MRIs) and its relationships to behaviors found in autism.

What do we hope to learn from this study? We hope to learn more about autism that will lead to a better understanding and treatment of this disorder. We are studying same gender twins, ages 3 years old to 14 years old, where one or both twins has autism. We are also studying “typically developing” twins (i.e. twins without autism) to compare with the twins that have autism.

If we join the study what will happen? How long will it take?
- We will interview you: You will talk to our staff about your twins. This will take about 4 hours.
- We will test your children: We will measure learning skills, language abilities, social skills, and behavior. This will take 4-5 hours for each child. (with breaks)
- We may collect DNA: We may ask your children to give a small sample of saliva. This sample will allow us to do a test to see if your twins are identical or fraternal.
- We will take MRIs of your children’s brains. The MRI scans will take place at Stanford University’s Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital (LPCH).

Will I have to travel to the interviews? Yes, the interviews, testing and MRIs will take place at Stanford University. If you live in the Bay Area we will reimburse you for mileage to and from Stanford. If you live further from Stanford, we will help arrange and pay for lodging and for travel to and from the University.

Will this study cost money? There are no costs to you or your family. After your family completes the study, you will get a reimbursement of $100 per child.

Can I get more information before I decide if I want to take part? Yes, we encourage you to talk with someone on our team to find out more about the study, and to see if your family may be eligible for the study. Please contact our Study Coordinator, Sue Cleveland; at (650) 723-7809. Once you have all of the information and we have answered your questions, you can decide if you want to join the study.

How do I sign up? If you decide that you are interested in being a part of the study after you speak with the Stanford ICATS staff, we will have you sign study consent forms and help arrange the interviews.

Who are the scientists working on this study? The Director of this study is Dr. Antonio Hardan and the Co-Director is Dr. Joachim Hallmayer. Both are from Stanford University.

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