

# Complex presentations of autism spectrum disorder: beyond the core features

American Academy of Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry, 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
October 18, 2019

# Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

Source	Research funding	Advisor/ consultant	Employee	Speakers' bureau	Books, intellectual property	In-kind services (e.g., travel)	Stock or equity	Honorarium or expenses for this presentation or meeting
Potential conflict	<b>Whitaker Scholar in Developmental Neuropsychiatry Award</b>  <b>(Marilyn and James Simons Family Giving)</b>							

# Discussion of off-label medication use

- Not part of this talk

Catatonia

Food selectivity

Social communication deficits &  
restricted/repetitive behavior

Sleep problems

Psychosis

# Psychosis in autism spectrum disorder

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American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Complex Presentations of ASD: Beyond the Core Features (Clinical Perspectives)

October 18, 2019

 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY  
DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

# Why care about psychotic symptoms in ASD?

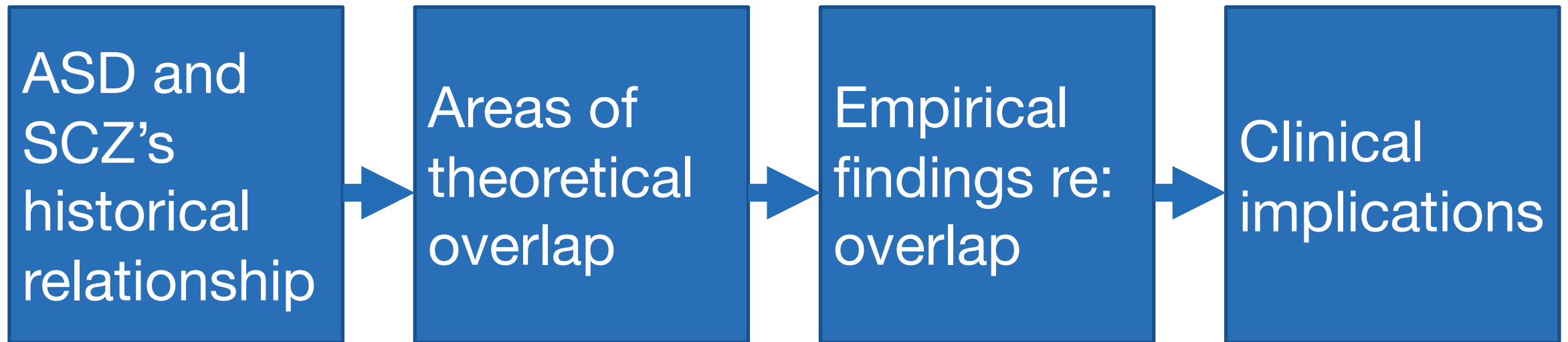








# Overview





“the **autistic** withdrawal of the [schizophrenic] patient to his fantasies, against which any influence from outside becomes an intolerable disturbance. This seems to be the most important factor. In severe cases it by itself can produce negativism.”

Bleuler, 1910  
(quoted in Kuhn and Cahn, 2004)

“The combination of **extreme autism**, obsessiveness, stereotypy, and echolalia brings the total picture into relationship with some of the basic **schizophrenic** phenomena. Some of the children have indeed been diagnosed as of this type at one time or another.”

Kanner, 1943





# CHILDHOOD SCHIZOPHRENIA

SYMPOSIUM, 1955

## 6. EARLY INFANTILE AUTISM, 1943-55

LEON EISENBERG, M.D., AND LEO KANNER, M.D.

*Children's Psychiatric Service, Harriet Lane Home, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland*

Takahashi, A. On psychotic symptoms (especially the autistic tendency) of mentally retarded children. *Japanese Journal of Child Psychiatry*, 1960, 1, 50-57.

## recent developments in the study of early childhood psychoses: infantile autism, childhood schizophrenia, and related disorders

Hingten and C. Q. Bryson

man 1967), elective mutism, retrolental fi  
nlasia (Wing 1966) developmental anhasia /

## Kanner's Syndrome or Early-Onset Psychosis: A Taxonomic Analysis of 142 Cases

Margot Prior,<sup>1</sup> Dennis Perry, and Christine Gajzago

*Monash University*

*Clayton, Victoria, Australia*

“A host of different syndromes have been included in the general category of ‘childhood **schizophrenia**’ – infantile **autism**, the atypical child, symbiotic **psychosis**, dementia praecocissima, dementia infantilis, **schizophrenic** syndrome of childhood, pseudo-psychopathic **schizophrenia**, and latent **schizophrenia** to name but a few ... The diagnostic situation can only be described as chaotic.”

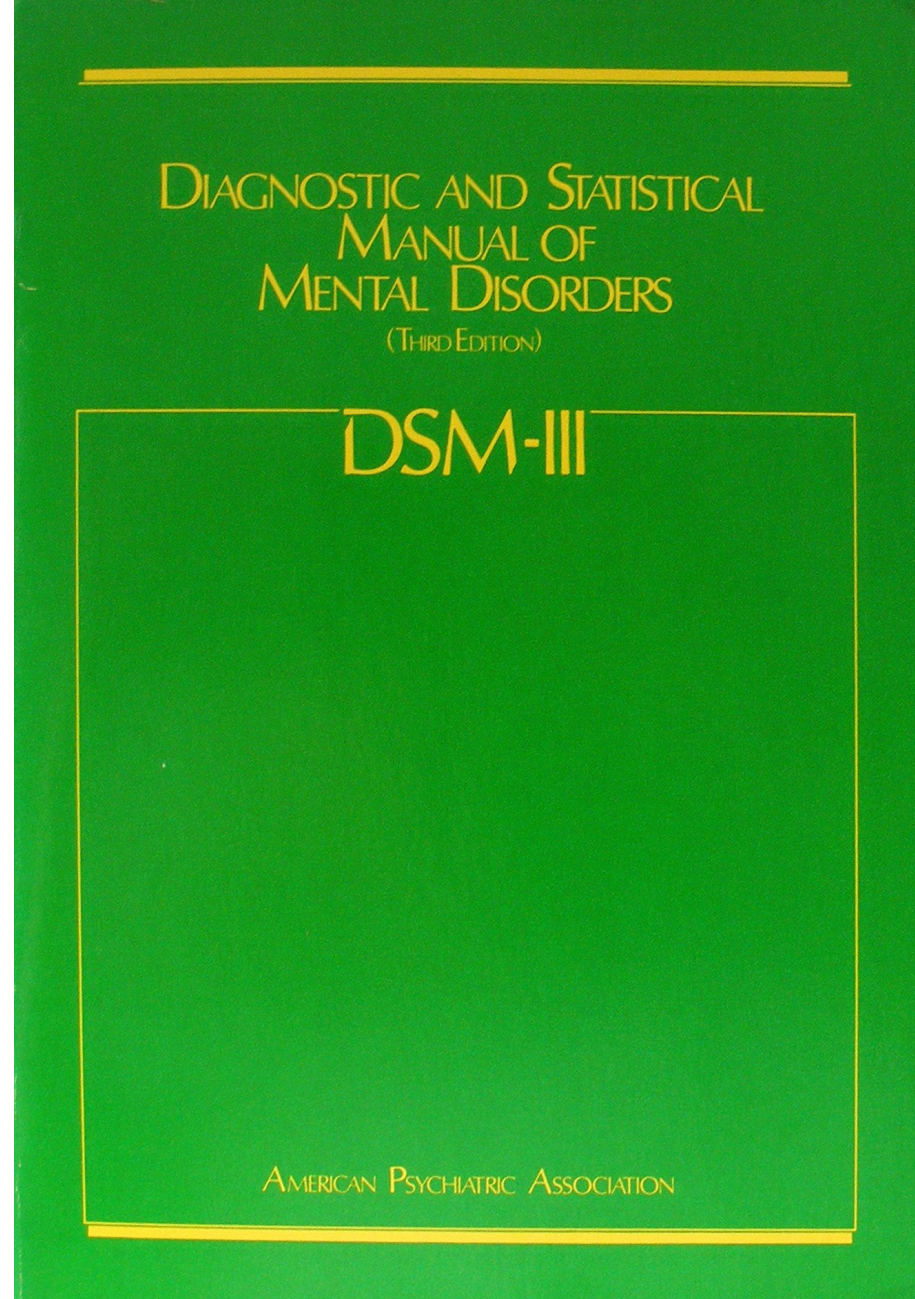
Rutter, 1972



## Editorial: Change of Journal Scope and Title

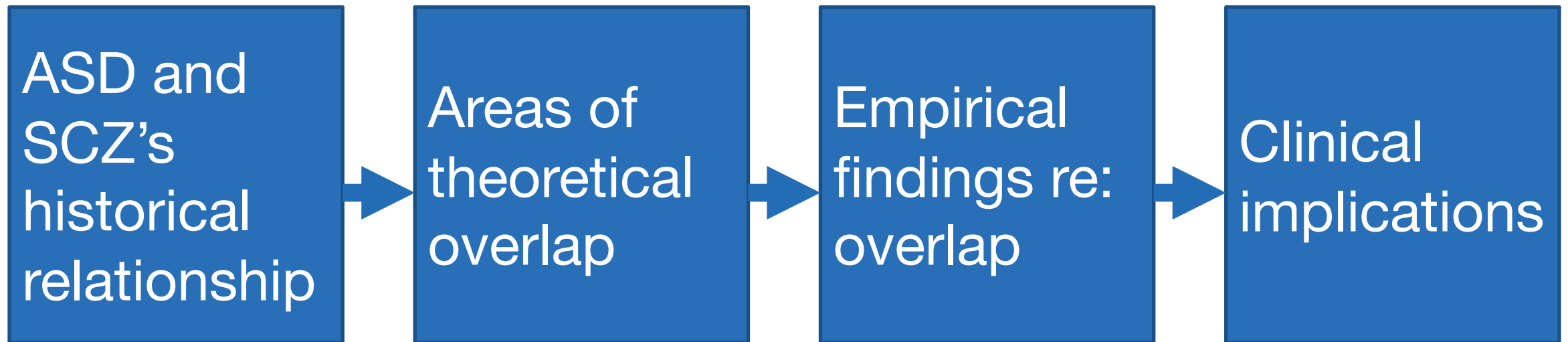
The title change with this issue of the journal was overdue. In a survey of our editorial board in March 1975, 93% of the board favored a change. Many different suggestions were offered, but a majority wanted to include developmental disorders in the new title. Our publishers thought it right to delay modifications, but as the evidence has become compelling they have now agreed to change the scope and title from the *Journal of Autism and Childhood Schizophrenia* to the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.

Schopler, Rutter & Chess, 1979



APA, 1980

# Overview



## Autism spectrum disorder

Typically  
diagnosed in  
**childhood**

Typically **stable**  
course

## Schizophrenia

Typically  
diagnosed in  
**adolescence or  
early adulthood**

Typically  
**deteriorative**  
course

## Autism spectrum disorder

Restricted or  
repetitive interests  
or behaviors

## Schizophrenia

Psychosis



Autism spectrum disorder

Schizophrenia

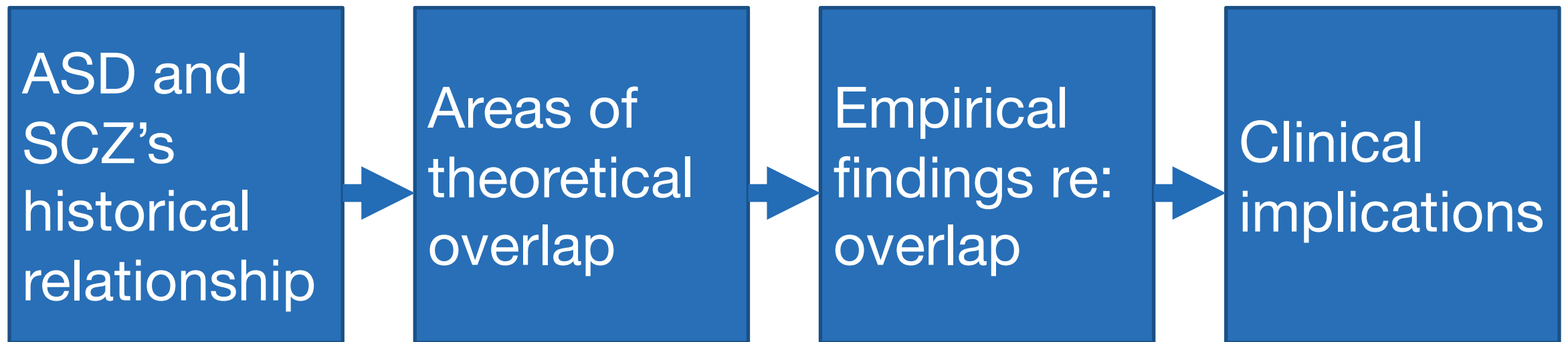
Cognitive systems:

- **Language**

Social processes:

- **Social communication**
- **Perception and understanding of self**
- **Perception and understanding of others**

# Overview



- Schizophrenia in the general population:
  - 1% prevalence
- Schizophrenia in people **with ASD**:
  - 3.55x odds** (Zheng, Zheng & Zou, 2018)
  - 4% prevalence** (Lai et al, 2019)

- ASD youth with **prodromal**/subthreshold psychotic symptoms **convert** to full-blown psychotic illness at similar rates as youth with prodromal symptoms who do *not* have ASD
- ...Yet ASD youth **are under-represented** in prodromal clinical settings

Foss-Feig et al, 2019

# Certain **groups within** ASD may be more psychosis-prone





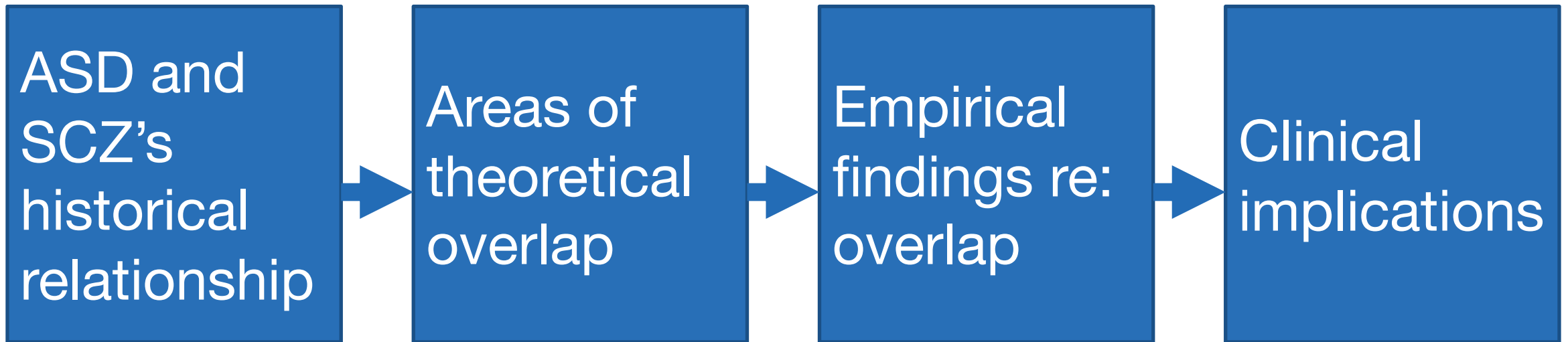
# We have examined **genetically-defined** groups

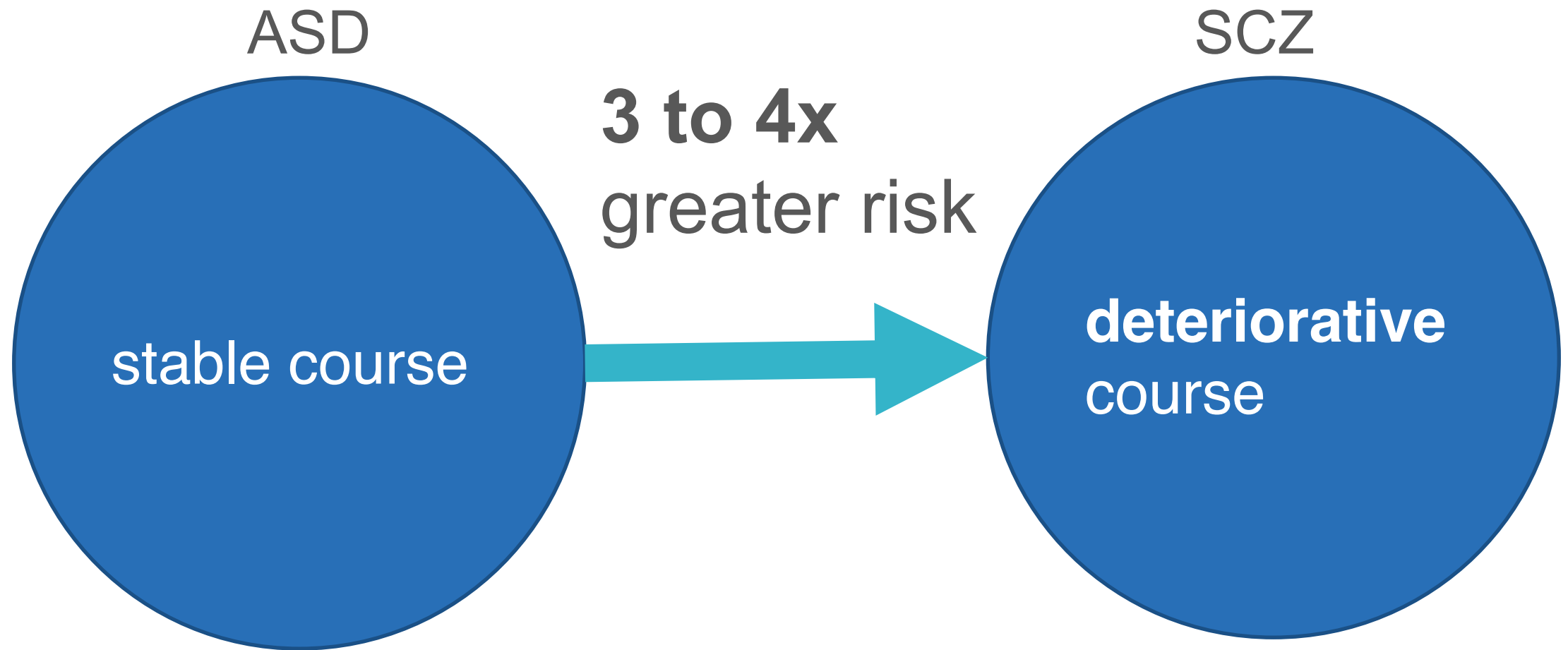
- **16p11.2 copy number variation**
  - 16p11.2 duplication and 16p11.2 deletion are both associated with autism
  - The ASD associated with 16p11.2 **duplication** may in some sense be **more** psychosis-prone than that associated with 16p11.2 **deletion** (though confirmatory evidence is needed)

Jutla et al, 2019



# Overview





# Look for change over time



# Probe the boundary between repetitive/perseverative behavior and psychosis

Take potential psychosis in ASD youth seriously (i.e., avoid the temptation to assume symptoms are “just” a function of autism)

# Mentors and collaborators

- Wendy Chung
- Rose Donohue
- Jennifer Foss-Feig
- LeeAnne Snyder
- Blake Turner
- Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele
- Agnes Whitaker

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