

## POLICY

### FDA spy saga

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a vast surveillance operation of five employees it believed were leaking confidential information, it emerged this week. The agency used computer software to gather more than 80,000 pages of records tracking the scientists' communications with politicians, lawyers, journalists and US president Barack Obama. *The New York Times* exposed the scope of the operation on 14 July after the cache of records was inadvertently posted on a public website by an FDA contractor. The scientists, four of whom have been fired, are suing the FDA, alleging that their e-mails were monitored. They had earlier raised concerns that the agency was approving unsafe medical imaging devices (see *Nature* **482**, 136; 2012).

### Research integrity

Major science funders in the United Kingdom are introducing a set of principles on research integrity as a condition for receiving grants. *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, which includes commitments to transparency and rigour in research, was launched on 11 July. It stipulates that those who employ researchers must have clear and confidential mechanisms for reporting allegations of misconduct, and must provide annual summaries of their activities in this area, including statements on any formal investigations. See [go.nature.com/f7smde](http://go.nature.com/f7smde) for more.

### Open access

The United Kingdom announced on 16 July that its publicly funded research



J. LEVAC/OTTAWA CITIZEN

## Scientists march on Canada's parliament

Some 2,000 researchers marched through the streets of Ottawa to Canada's Parliament Hill on 10 July, to protest against severe cuts to government research labs and — the scientists say — a lack of evidence-based decision-making in the Canadian government. Cuts

to the federal budget this year have meant the closure of various scientific programmes, including the Experimental Lakes Area, a 44-year-old research station encompassing a system of 58 freshwater lakes in northwestern Ontario. See [go.nature.com/dbz3bm](http://go.nature.com/dbz3bm) for more.

would be made free to read. From April 2013, research findings paid for by the country's seven research councils (government-funded grant agencies) must be free to access within six months of publication, Research Councils UK said. The next day, the European Commission announced similar ambitions in proposals for its 2014–20 research-funding programme, Horizon 2020. See page 285 for more.

### Telescope club full

The Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST), which aims to map the southern sky in unprecedented detail, now has a full complement of international partners. The success increases the chances that the US National Science

Foundation, a key sponsor, will approve the project, allowing it to begin operations in Chile in 2022. See page 284 for more.

### HIV prevention

The US Food and Drug Administration on 16 July approved the drug Truvada, a combination of the antiretroviral drugs emtricitabine and tenofovir, as a way to reduce the risk of sexually acquired HIV infection. It is the first medication approved to prevent the disease. See page 283 for more.

### Biosafety bumped

Opponents of plans to build a National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Kansas are cheering a review

released on 13 July by the US National Research Council. The NBAF would be the only US lab able to study diseases in cows and horses at the highest biosafety level, but the idea of building it in America's 'cattle country' had provoked protests. The report affirms the need for such facilities, but suggests scaling back the plans for the NBAF and moving some its functions to existing labs. See [go.nature.com/rruzdy](http://go.nature.com/rruzdy) for more.

### Controversial prize

After years of argument, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was set to award a prize for life-sciences research sponsored by Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, president of

NIVA Equatorial Guinea, on 17 July. The prize was proposed in 2008 but had been in limbo as a result of opposition from Western diplomats and UNESCO's director-general, Irina Bokova, who pointed to corruption and human-rights abuses in Equatorial Guinea. But in March, UNESCO's executive board narrowly voted to remove Obiang's name from the award's title and push ahead. See [go.nature.com/dkekrr](http://go.nature.com/dkekrr) for more.



week. The 51-year-old Lauder Atmospheric Research Station (pictured) on the South Island specializes in measuring levels of chlorofluorocarbons, ultraviolet light and greenhouse gases. But New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, the government-owned company that administers the lab, has told Lauder staff that it plans to axe all three of the site's atmospheric-scientist positions. See [go.nature.com/jzw1dm](http://go.nature.com/jzw1dm) for more.

RESEARCH

**Pluto's fifth moon**

The Hubble Space Telescope has discovered another moon orbiting the dwarf planet Pluto, NASA announced on 11 July. P5, as the moon is informally known, is just 10–25 kilometres across, which is smaller than the satellites P4 (found last July), and Nix and Hydra (spotted in 2005). These are all tiny compared with Pluto itself (around 2,300 kilometres in diameter) or its largest moon Charon (1,200 kilometres). See [go.nature.com/6kpdse](http://go.nature.com/6kpdse) for more.

**Atmospheric lab**

Plans to cut the number of scientists and reduce measurements at a world-class atmospheric-research centre in New Zealand prompted a barrage of international concern last

**Pathogen genomes**

An open-access database of the genomes of 100,000 food-borne pathogens will be built over five years in an effort to speed up identification of disease outbreaks and development of diagnostic tests. On 12 July, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the 100K Genome Project, which will sequence proven

bacterial pathogens provided by the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The project will be headquartered at the University of California, Davis, with support from Agilent Technologies, based in Santa Clara, California.

BUSINESS

**Biotech buyout**

British drug giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) announced on 16 July that it had acquired the biotech firm Human Genome Sciences, based in Rockville, Maryland in a deal worth US\$3.6 billion. GSK has been pursuing the firm for some months; a \$2.6-billion offer was rejected in April. Together, the two companies developed Benlysta (belimumab) for systemic lupus and have candidates for heart disease (darapladib) and diabetes (albiglutide) in clinical trials. GSK will now own all three drugs.

PEOPLE

**Data detective**

Uri Simonsohn, the researcher who flagged up questionable data in studies by social psychologist Dirk Smeesters, last week revealed to *Nature* that he believes data from a second social psychologist, Lawrence

COMING UP

22–27 JULY

Latest results on efforts to cure HIV are presented at the International AIDS Conference in Washington DC. [www.aids2012.org](http://www.aids2012.org)

27 JULY

Chemist Patrick Harran and the regents of the University of California are called before court to answer criminal charges over the death of 23-year-old Sheharbano Sangji in a laboratory fire 3.5 years ago. [go.nature.com/cvxyii](http://go.nature.com/cvxyii)

Sanna, is suspiciously perfect. Sanna's former employer, the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, says that he resigned his professorship there at the end of May. It is not clear why Sanna resigned — but his departure followed questions from Simonsohn and a review by Sanna's previous institution, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Sanna has asked that three of his papers be retracted from the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. See [go.nature.com/fgfzvi](http://go.nature.com/fgfzvi) for more.

**DARPA director**

Arati Prabhakar will be the next chief of the Pentagon's research arm, the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in Arlington, Virginia. Prabhakar, who trained as a physicist and headed the National Institute of Standards and Technology before working in venture-capital investment, starts on 30 July. She replaces Regina Dugan, the agency's first female director, who in March left after two years to work for Google.

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SOURCE: USGS

TREND WATCH

Japan and Vietnam last month launched the joint Rare Earth Research and Technology Transfer Centre in Hanoi, part of efforts to break China's monopoly on rare-earth elements (see graphs). The 17 metals are used in high-tech applications such as catalysts, but prices have rocketed as China has imposed export limits. The centre aims to develop technologies to separate and concentrate the elements, which would enable processing of ores from more mines worldwide. See [go.nature.com/cebfoj](http://go.nature.com/cebfoj) for more.

**CHINA'S RARE-EARTH DOMINANCE**

China owns half the global reserves of rare-earth minerals, but produces almost all the world's supply.

