

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

Rising resistance

The world is heading for a “post-antibiotic era” in which drugs against common infections will cease to work, warns the World Health Organization. On 30 April, the agency called for a global surveillance system to track how antibiotics are being used and where resistance is cropping up. See page 141 for more.

UK animal research

In a bid to improve transparency, the UK government is considering reforming a law about animal research conducted by the nation's institutions. Current rules prohibit the Home Office from releasing any information that could be considered confidential, such as on the type of animal research or the institutions involved. On 1 May, the government launched a consultation on its proposal to repeal this blanket ban and replace it with a rule that protects information about “people, places and intellectual property”. See go.nature.com/zijvk2 for more.

UK spaceport

The UK government is looking into building a commercial spaceport by 2018. The move, announced in a report on 30 April, is part of a raft of measures designed to boost the UK space industry. A committee will consider locations for the port and review regulation reforms to enable commercial space flight in the United Kingdom.

Reef heritage

The Great Barrier Reef, which lies off the coast of Queensland in Australia, narrowly missed being listed as ‘in danger’ by the committee that manages the list of world heritage sites.



LILLY CLARKE/CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

More protection for Coral Sea

One of the world's largest marine conservation areas has been created in the Coral Sea by New Caledonia, a French territory more than 1,000 kilometres east of Australia. The government of New Caledonia said on 23 April that a management plan is in development

for the 1.3-million-square-kilometre marine park, but exactly how much of the area will be off-limits to fishing is not yet clear. Australia has already protected large swathes of the Coral Sea, which lies off its eastern coast and is connected to the Pacific Ocean (see *Nature* 495, 155; 2013).

The preliminary decision taken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization committee on 30 April is expected to be finalized at a meeting in June. The committee acknowledged that Australia has taken some measures to manage the reef, but expressed concern about developments such as a planned dumping of dredged material. It warned that the reef could still make the list in 2015 unless it is further protected.

RIKEN paper chase

Pressure has intensified on a Japanese committee investigating misconduct in two stem-cell papers after whistleblowers accused three panel members of problems with their own work. This follows the panel's judgement

of misconduct last month for Haruko Obokata, of the RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology in Kobe (which she is appealing against), and last week's resignation by the panel's head over alleged problems with two of his papers. Last week, RIKEN also made public that on 25 April, the institute's president Ryoji Noyori told all 280 principal investigators to examine their papers; a RIKEN spokesperson notes that, collectively, these researchers publish more than 2,500 papers each year. See go.nature.com/de7dxu for more.

PEOPLE

Stem-cell head

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced Randal Mills as its next president on

30 April. Mills is former chief executive of Osiris Therapeutics in Columbia, Maryland — the first company to commercialize a stem-cell drug. His appointment is seen as a bid to help the institute to deliver stem-cell treatments. Mills will begin in the post on 15 May, replacing reproductive biologist Alan Trounson, who announced his departure last October. CIRM is one of the world's largest stem-cell funding agencies.

Society fellows

The Royal Society, Britain's national science academy, announced on 1 May the election of 50 new fellows, including England's chief medical officer Sally Davies. The society also announced ten new foreign members, among them Nobel physics

NASA

laureate and former US energy secretary Steven Chu. Just seven (14%) of the newly elected fellows are women, leaving the Royal Society trailing behind the US National Academy of Sciences, which two days earlier announced 84 new members, of whom 21% are women. See go.nature.com/dehfg9 for more.

FUNDING

Research red tape

Researchers at US institutions are overloaded with administrative tasks that are hampering their ability to do science, warns the National Science Board in Arlington, Virginia, in a report published on 1 May. The report surveyed thousands of federally funded scientists. It found that the most burdensome requirements include writing research grants and reporting progress. "Excessive and ineffective requirements take scientists away from the bench unnecessarily and divert taxpayer dollars from research to superfluous grant administration," says Arthur Bienenstock, chairman of the task force that produced the report.

FACILITIES

New-look spacesuit

Martian-bound astronauts may one day sport spacesuits similar



to the prototype pictured. The bright blue styling unveiled by NASA on 30 April was the public's favourite, winning 233,431 votes (nearly two-thirds). Unlike previous generations of designs, this suit includes a rigid upper torso to protect the astronaut during ventures out onto the Martian surface; it also features more flexible hip and shoulder joints. The suit is expected to be ready for testing by November. It will be put through its paces in the gigantic pool in Houston, Texas, that NASA uses to train astronauts for spacewalks. Trips to Mars, however, remain decades away.

RESEARCH

Element 117

Scientists have created atoms of the superheavy element 117, they announced on 1 May, confirming the element's discovery four years ago by a different group. The latest

experiments were conducted at the GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research in Darmstadt, Germany (J. Khuyagbaatar *et al. Phys. Rev. Lett.* **112**, 172501; 2014). The atoms, which were created by smashing together lighter elements, were first glimpsed at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna, Russia, in 2010. Official recognition of the discovery, and a name, await the approval of experts at the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.

New poxvirus found

A virus related to smallpox has emerged in the Republic of Georgia. Epidemiologist Neil Vora of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, and his colleagues isolated a virus from two cow herders who became ill after handling sick animals, and discovered that it was not cowpox but a novel type. The researchers reported their results on 30 April at a meeting in Atlanta. Finding a new poxvirus that affects humans is rare, but this is probably because of a lack of surveillance, the team says.

BUSINESS

Sales suspended

The maker of a device used to remove benign uterine

COMING UP

10–13 MAY

The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases meets in Barcelona, Spain. The agenda includes antimicrobial resistance and viral infections in pregnancy. go.nature.com/n6wqz8

19–24 MAY

The general assembly of the World Health Organization takes place in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting will elect a new president and discuss a global strategy to prevent tuberculosis. go.nature.com/myojx8

growths has suspended its sales, following a warning that the device increases the risk of spreading undetected cancer. Johnson & Johnson of New Brunswick, New Jersey, announced the suspension on 29 April, after the US Food and Drug Administration recommended that physicians eschew the device. Known as a power morcellator, it is used to break up growths known as fibroids so that they can be more easily removed during surgery. See go.nature.com/osoyjw for more.

Pharma mega-deal

Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, headquartered in New York, has been rebuffed after a second attempt to buy London-based drug firm AstraZeneca, a merger that would create the world's largest pharmaceutical company. On 2 May, AstraZeneca rejected Pfizer's improved bid of £63 billion (US\$107 billion). But on 5 May, Pfizer's chief executive Ian Read said that he still intended to pursue a transaction. See go.nature.com/yqgk3 for more.

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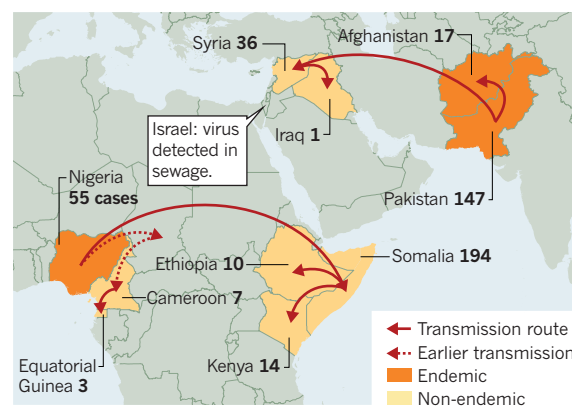
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TREND WATCH

The spread of wild poliovirus is a public-health emergency that requires a coordinated global response, the World Health Organization declared on 5 May. The agency said that people in countries currently spreading cases abroad (Pakistan, Cameroon and Syria) must be vaccinated before travelling; other nations in which polio is endemic (see chart) should encourage immunization. The measures were invoked under the binding International Health Regulations, last used in the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic.

POLIO-SPREAD FEARS

Wild poliovirus is endemic in only three countries, but clinical cases have been confirmed in seven others in 2013–14.



SOURCE: GPEI/O. ROSENBAUER