

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## RESEARCH

### Stem-cell source

Stem cells that researchers claimed to have created by exposing ordinary cells to stress were probably embryonic stem cells that had been introduced into lab samples, according to an investigation of the claims. The RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology in Kobe, Japan, where the original claims were made, commissioned the investigation by outside experts. In a report released on 26 December last year, investigators noted the improbability of accidental contamination, but said that they could not determine whether misconduct had occurred. See [go.nature.com/bk4atr](http://go.nature.com/bk4atr) for more.

## POLICY

### Blood ban to end

The US Food and Drug Administration has announced plans to end a lifetime ban on blood donation by men who have had sex with men. The long-standing ban was intended to prevent the spread of HIV, but has been criticized

as discriminatory by gay-rights activists. The proposed policy, revealed on 23 December 2014, will allow blood donations from men who have sex with men if at least a year has passed since their last sexual contact. The United Kingdom adopted a similar policy when lifting an analogous ban in 2011. See [go.nature.com/s8oryr](http://go.nature.com/s8oryr) for more.

### Lab-safety head

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has started recruitment for its first chief of laboratory safety. In July 2014, the agency revealed a series of accidents, including the mishandling of anthrax and a dangerous variety of the H5N1 influenza virus (see [go.nature.com/lzqpwmm](http://go.nature.com/lzqpwmm)). On 23 December, scientists discovered that a technician might have been exposed to live Ebola virus in a CDC lab in Atlanta, Georgia.

### Monarch status

The US Fish and Wildlife Service announced on 29 December last year that it will review whether to list a subspecies of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)



as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Every year, many monarch populations migrate vast distances across North America (pictured), but population sizes have plummeted in recent years (see *Nature* 506, 10; 2014). Habitat loss threatens the butterfly, and the use of agricultural pesticides has diminished the availability of milkweed, the caterpillar's only food source.

### Bioethics concerns

In a letter on 22 December 2014, four members of the US Congress asked the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to review the bioethics of studies on monkeys at an NIH

laboratory. Animal-rights activists have campaigned against the experiments, which include studies that measure how separating young monkeys from their mothers affects alcohol consumption and responses to stress in the offspring later in life. The lawmakers have requested a bioethics report from the NIH by 27 February.

## EVENTS

### Balloon hopes burst

On 30 December last year, NASA brought down a scientific-balloon mission early because of a leak. The balloon had launched on 28 December from Antarctica and boasted a new 'super-pressure' design that was expected to help keep it aloft for 100 days or more. The 532,000-cubic-metre balloon was carrying a  $\gamma$ -ray telescope, known as the Compton Spectrometer and Imager, to hunt for high-energy photons streaming from the cosmos (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/x2q>; 2014). Two other balloon missions, ANITA and SPIDER, have launched successfully from Antarctica and are collecting data as planned.

## BUSINESS

### Biotech boom

The cancer-treatment firm Juno Therapeutics launched the biggest initial public offering of 2014 for a biotechnology company, and finished the year worth more than US\$4.7 billion. Based in Seattle, Washington, the firm is developing ways to engineer immune cells to fight cancer (see *Nature* 516, 156; 2014). Juno's public offering on 19 December was worth \$264.6 million, but the company's share price had climbed from \$24 to \$52.22 by the end of the year.

## TREND WATCH

The preprint server arXiv.org, to which physicists, mathematicians and computer scientists routinely upload manuscripts to share their findings publicly before peer review, surpassed 1 million research articles on 29 December 2014, after administrators processed manuscripts submitted over the Christmas period. Founded in 1991 by physicist Paul Ginsparg at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, the repository now receives about 8,000 submissions each month. See [go.nature.com/di3rwb](http://go.nature.com/di3rwb) for more.

## GROWTH MEDIUM

To cope with projected increases in manuscript submissions, arXiv plans to add one digit to its paper identification numbers.

