

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### EU clinical trials

A long-running effort to reform the regulation of clinical trials in the European Union concluded on 20 December. A new law will replace the much-maligned Clinical Trials Directive, and will streamline and standardize applications for trials. The Clinical Trials Regulation, which includes compulsory preregistration of all trials and tougher informed-consent requirements, must be formally approved before it can take effect.

### Primate problems

The US Department of Agriculture has fined Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, more than US\$24,000 for violating the Animal Welfare Act. Several of the 11 violations announced by the agency on 18 December occurred at Harvard's troubled New England Primate Research Center in Southborough, Massachusetts, which is slated to close by mid-2015. In late 2011, two primates became dehydrated as the result

of a malfunctioning water dispenser. One of the animals subsequently died.

### E-cigarette rules

European legislators have shied away from tough proposals to regulate electronic cigarettes as medical devices. According to legislation agreed on 18 December, e-cigarettes will be subject to the less-stringent controls that are applied to tobacco products, unless they are marketed with health claims. Formal approval of the agreement, which includes policy changes for tobacco products, is needed before the rules can come into force in 2014. See [go.nature.com/wobgkx](http://go.nature.com/wobgkx) for more.



one of three scientists to share a Lasker Award in 1998 for clinical medical research. From 2002 to 2009, she served on former US President George W. Bush's bioethics council, and was a vocal opponent of the Bush administration's restrictions on US embryonic stem-cell research.

Intelligence Agency. Beale has agreed to pay the government nearly \$1.4 million in restitution and penalties.

### UCSF chancellor

Susan Desmond-Hellmann will step down as chancellor of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), in March to become chief executive of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington. UCSF said on 17 December that it will appoint Sam Hawgood, dean of its medical school, as interim chancellor, pending approval.

## EVENTS

### Star surveyor

The European Space Agency's Gaia mission, designed to map the Milky Way in unprecedented detail, launched on 19 December from Kourou, French Guiana. The mission is tasked with charting a billion stars, with the aim of helping astronomers to better understand the origins of our Galaxy. See [go.nature.com/bhxuqp](http://go.nature.com/bhxuqp) for more.

## BUSINESS

### Pharma fees out

In a bid to mend its public image, pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) will by 2016 start to phase out direct payments to physicians for attending medical conferences or giving promotional talks about GSK products, the firm said on 17 December. By early 2015, it also plans to scrap the use of prescription sales targets in determining pay for sales representatives. GSK currently faces investigation in China for allegedly bribing physicians and officials to boost its drug sales (see *Nature* 499, 385; 2013).

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## PEOPLE

### Geneticist dies

Geneticist Janet Rowley (pictured) of the University of Chicago in Illinois died on 17 December, aged 88. In the 1970s, Rowley identified a translocation — in which genetic material is swapped between chromosomes — in leukaemia cells. For her work on that and other translocations, Rowley was

### EPA fraudster

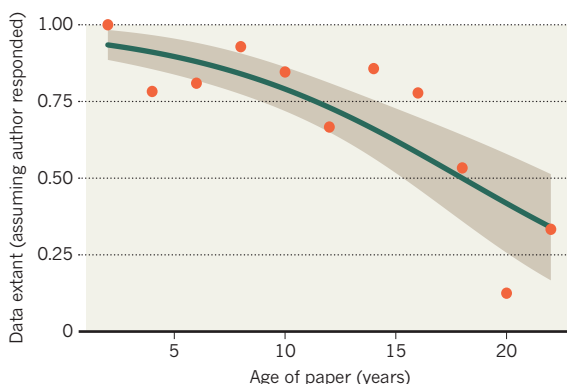
John Beale, a former official at the US Environmental Protection Agency, was sentenced on 18 December to 32 months in prison for stealing nearly US\$900,000 from the organization. Starting in 2000, Beale collected a salary and travel reimbursements while skipping a total of 2.5 years of work and falsely claiming to be working for the US Central

## TREND WATCH

Raw data from research publications are vanishing rapidly, according to an analysis of 516 ecology papers published between 1991 and 2011 (T. H. Vines *et al.* *Curr. Biol.* <http://doi.org/qpm>; 2013). Data could be obtained for most of the 2011 papers, but availability fell by 17% for each previous year (see chart). As few as 20% of authors of papers from the early 1990s could provide data, as a result of the information being misplaced or stored on defunct technology. See [go.nature.com/jmosxn](http://go.nature.com/jmosxn) for more.

### MISSING DATA

As research articles age, the odds of their raw data being extant drop noticeably.



SOURCE: CURR. BIOL.