

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

RESEARCH

NIH ethics row

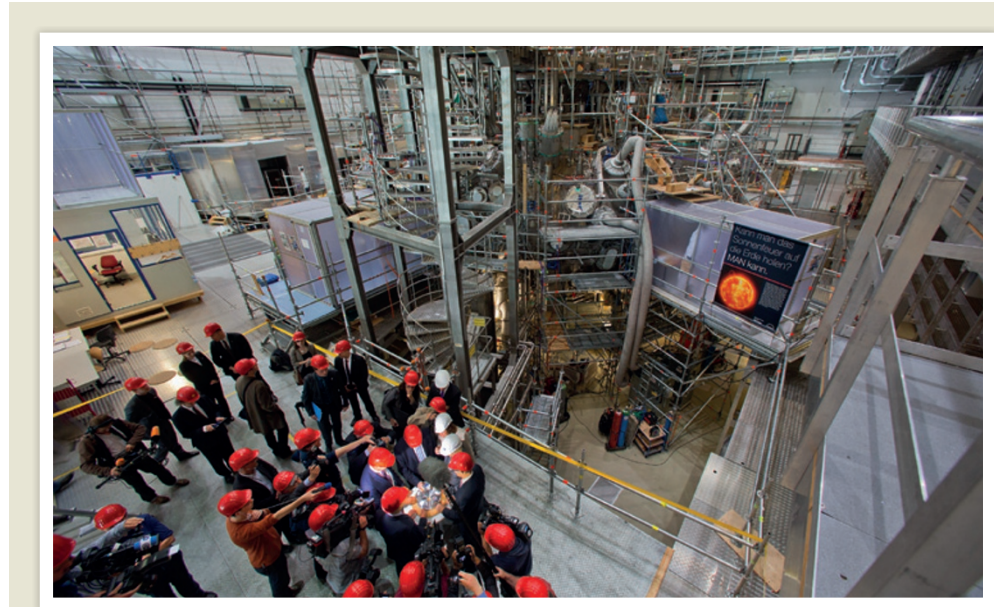
The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) may have interfered with an inquiry into one of its own clinical trials, according to internal e-mails released on 20 May by the watchdog group Public Citizen of Washington DC. Last year, the US Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) criticized an NIH-funded trial of oxygen treatments in premature babies for failing to adequately inform parents of the risks. The NIH was allowed to edit drafts of the OHRP's report, the e-mails suggest. Public Citizen says that this compromises the investigator's integrity. See go.nature.com/3mmcuk for more.

Transgenic trials

Scientists in France are angry about the acquittal on 14 May of 54 activists who in August 2010 destroyed experimental transgenic grapevines in a field trial in the east of the country. In a joint statement released on 18 May, 12 research agencies and university organizations said that they had "serious concerns" about an appeal court's decision to throw out the case. The court said that the trials were illegal because the National Institute for Agricultural Research, which conducted them, had not proved that the vines would not cause health or environmental damage. See go.nature.com/do7mkp for more.

Study etiquette

Efforts to replicate psychology studies should follow a set of ground rules to foster good will, says Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel-prizewinning psychologist at Princeton University in New Jersey. In an open letter posted online on 20 May, he calls on



JENS BUETTNER/EPA/CORBIS

Germany inaugurates 'stellarator'

The Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics inaugurated its Wendelstein 7-X fusion experiment on 20 May, marking the end of installation and the beginning of preparations to start the machine in 2015. The €1-billion (US\$1.4-billion) 'stellarator' project in Greifswald, Germany, features a wreath of twisted magnetic coils to confine

a super-heated plasma of hydrogen isotopes. The much larger €15-billion ITER experiment being built in southern France will use a simpler doughnut-shaped magnetic-confinement device called a tokamak. Although notoriously difficult to design and build, a stellarator produces a more stable plasma than a tokamak.

would-be replicators to seek input on study design from the authors of the original report. Replicators should also provide authors with a full description of their study plans, Kahneman adds. His letter comes as the journal *Social Psychology* publishes a second tranche of replication efforts in the field, many of which failed to confirm the original findings.

Hurricane season

The Atlantic hurricane season this year is expected to be near normal, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said on 22 May. A developing El Niño weather pattern in the equatorial Pacific Ocean

is likely to suppress hurricane activity in the Atlantic, according to the agency. It predicts that 8–13 tropical storms will form during the season, which begins on 1 June. Of those, 3–6 are expected to develop into hurricanes.

Space-probe reboot

NASA has granted a group of citizen scientists permission to co-opt a defunct 1970s space probe. The unprecedented agreement, announced on 21 May, would permit the group's company, Skycorp of Los Gatos, California, to try to contact and take over control of the International Sun–Earth Explorer-3 (ISEE-3) when it approaches Earth in August. Skycorp wants to place

the craft between Earth and the Sun, where it would reprise its role in monitoring space weather. The crowdfunding team plans to use a radio telescope at Morehead State University in Kentucky to command the probe. NASA launched the ISEE-3 in 1978 and shut it down in 1997.

FUNDING

German windfall

Eight months after Germany's federal elections, the government has finally outlined how it will make good on election promises to increase funding for research. On 26 May the government announced that research will receive €2.5 billion

NASA/JPL-CALTECH/UNIV. ARIZONA

(US\$3.4 billion) out of an extra €6 billion to be injected into science and education in the 2014–17 legislative period. It is not yet clear how the windfall will be distributed between universities, research organizations and federally funded research programmes.

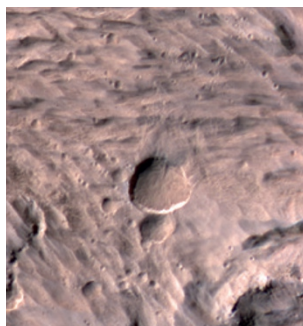
Vaccine plea

On 20 May, the GAVI Alliance — a global health partnership based in Geneva, Switzerland, that is seeking to improve access to vaccines in low-income countries — asked its donors, which include governments and charities, for an extra US\$7.5 billion for 2016–20. For the period 2011–15, GAVI received \$4.3 billion, \$600 million more than requested. The group will ask donors to commit to pledges at a GAVI Alliance replenishment meeting next year in Germany.

EVENTS

Nuclear dump

In a bid to reduce the build-up of contaminated water beneath the destroyed Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactors, Japan's Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) has begun to bypass upstream groundwater into the Pacific Ocean. On 21 May, it discharged the first tranche — 561 tonnes of stored groundwater.



Mars crater spotted

Some time between 27 March and 28 March 2012, this crater (pictured) formed on the surface of Mars — the biggest ever identified through 'before' and 'after' images. Scientists used archive images to confirm the formation date of the crater, seen here in an image taken by the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter on 9 May.

POLICY

Review panel cut

The body that has overseen all gene-therapy research in the United States since 1974 is to have its activities drastically reduced. The US National Institutes of Health said on 22 May that the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee, which it administers, will now publicly review only those gene-therapy trials that pose special risks and fail to receive adequate review by other governmental and institutional

bodies. A US Institute of Medicine panel proposed this scale-back in December.

Covert crackdown

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) will no longer use vaccination programmes to obtain information for its operations, according to a White House letter made public on 19 May. In 2011, the CIA was accused of mounting a fake hepatitis B vaccination campaign in Pakistan so that it could obtain DNA from children living in a compound later found to house Osama bin Laden (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/bgbmgf>; 2011).

US physics plan

High-energy physics in the United States must emphasize international collaborations to remain vibrant in the face of tight budgets, says a 22 May report from the US Department of Energy's Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel. It stresses the need for the United States to remain a key player in the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Europe's particle-physics lab near Geneva, Switzerland, and to stay involved in the proposed International Linear Collider in Japan. The panel also recommends recasting a proposed neutrino facility at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois,

COMING UP

29–30 MAY

In Washington DC, scientists, policy-makers and environmental groups discuss how to restore ecosystems on large scales, with projects such as engineering wetlands. go.nature.com/ra2zfd

4–15 JUNE

The United Nations holds climate talks in Bonn, Germany, to discuss progress under the Kyoto Protocol, and to continue negotiations towards a new treaty in Paris next year. go.nature.com/iembtb

as an internationally funded effort. See go.nature.com/fo5b8f for more.

Chemical ban

Minnesota is to become the first US state to ban the sale of products containing triclosan, an antimicrobial agent found in soaps, body washes and other cleaning products. The ban was signed into law on 16 May. Triclosan is already under investigation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) owing to safety concerns. The Minnesota law, which will come into effect on 1 January 2017, includes exceptions for products approved for consumer use by the FDA.

BUSINESS

Pharma deal off

The US drug firm Pfizer has abandoned its pursuit of rival pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, it announced on 26 May. London-based AstraZeneca, together with some UK politicians and scientists, had fiercely opposed the proposal.

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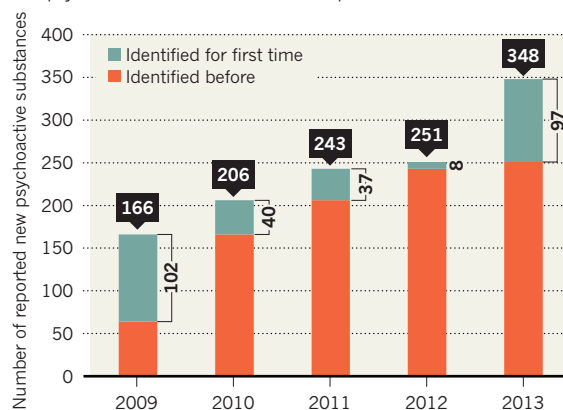
For daily news updates see: www.nature.com/news

TREND WATCH

New illicit psychoactive substances are being developed at an "unprecedented pace" globally, according to a report released on 20 May by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Individual nations have banned some of these drugs, but none is under international control. More than two-thirds were synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones or phenethylamines. The latest numbers probably rose, in part, owing to a UN monitoring effort that was launched in June last year.

SURGE IN SYNTHETIC DRUGS

The United Nations drug agency reports that a cumulative total of 348 new psychoactive substances have been spotted since 2009.



SOURCE: UNODC