

RESEARCH

Dwarf planet find

An international hunt for objects in the distant Solar System has turned up a new dwarf planet far beyond Neptune. The object, named 2015 RR245, is about 700 kilometres wide and is on the way to making its closest approach to the Sun, at 5 billion kilometres, or 34 times the Earth–Sun distance. At its farthest point, the object will be some 19 billion kilometres from the Sun, giving it one of the largest orbits of any known dwarf planet. Astronomers with the Outer Solar System Origins Survey discovered 2015 RR245 during their ongoing search at the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope in Hawaii.

Trial deaths

A clinical trial run by cancer-drug developer Juno Therapeutics of Seattle, Washington, has been put on hold by regulators following the deaths of two patients in the same week, the company announced on 7 July. The trial was studying the effects of genetically engineered T cells, a type of immune cell, on a form of leukaemia. Both patients died after a chemotherapy drug was added to the treatment. The two latest deaths follow a similar one in May.

Wellcome opens up

The Wellcome Trust, one of the world's largest biomedical charities, will launch its own open-access publishing venture later this year. The venture, called *Wellcome Open Research*, was announced by the trust on 6 July. It will be managed by *F1000Research*, a platform that publishes manuscripts within days of submission, after a quick sanity check by its in-house



JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

Huge mangrove die-off in Australia

Mangrove forests in northern Australia are dying off on a large scale, reveal satellite and aerial images released on 11 July. Norm Duke, a mangrove scientist at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, says that 7,000 hectares of mangroves have been affected along the Gulf of Carpentaria. The die-off seems to be

connected to extreme ocean warming associated with the 2015–16 El Niño event in the tropical Pacific Ocean, which also led to coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef. Calling the event “unprecedented”, Duke says that scientists must investigate the cause and scale up monitoring efforts.

editors; peer review is then done after publication. Unlike many journals, authors choose their own reviewers, and reviews are generally short, averaging 400 words. Wellcome thinks that other major research funders are likely to create similar systems, and that over time the ventures could merge into one big, international open-access publishing platform. See go.nature.com/29nth06 for more.

Olympians study

Researchers in the United States hope to enrol 1,000 US Olympic athletes and staff in a Zika virus study. The participants are travelling to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the Olympic and Paralympic games in August and September. The

mosquito-borne virus, which has been linked to birth defects, has spread across Brazil and the Americas in recent months. The study, announced on 5 July and funded by the National Institutes of Health, will examine factors such as where the virus resides in the body and whether birth defects result from infection. Participants will be asked to complete health questionnaires and to provide samples of bodily fluids.

Zika vaccine deal

French drugmaker Sanofi announced on 6 July that it has signed an agreement with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, a laboratory run by the US Department of Defense, to develop a vaccine for the Zika virus. Walter Reed plans to share its inactivated

virus vaccine technology with Sanofi's vaccine division, which will handle clinical development and regulatory approval. The partnership hopes to produce a vaccine ready for human trials starting in October. Vaccines for the mosquito-borne virus, which is spreading through the Americas and has been linked to birth defects, have proved challenging to develop.

PEOPLE

French agency row

A ferocious battle has erupted in France over who will head the country's National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) for the next four years. The scientific community overwhelmingly backs the incumbent, François Houllier,

PIER MARCO TACCA/GETTY
for a second term, and rejects President François Hollande's nominee Philippe Mauguin, chief of staff to the agriculture minister. The vast majority of INRA's researchers have signed an online petition that claims that Mauguin is a political choice, citing his insufficient scientific experience; most opposition parliamentarians have called for Hollande to suspend the nomination process. As *Nature* went to press, the National Assembly and Senate economic affairs committees were still scheduled to vote on Mauguin's appointment on 13 July.

Scientist acquitted

A judge in Verona, Italy, has acquitted virologist Ilaria Capua of all charges of attempting to create and profit from an epidemic of avian influenza. In the 5 July ruling, the judge also dismissed related lesser charges because the time limit had passed for legal proceedings to be brought. The accusations had been under investigation for more than a decade. Capua (**pictured**), former research director of the Experimental Institute for the Prevention of Animal Diseases in Legnano and one of 16 defendants in the complex case, took a job as director of the Center for Excellence in One Health Research at the University of



Florida in Gainesville in June, citing the difficulties of doing science in Italy.

BUSINESS

Theranos troubles

Elizabeth Holmes, founder and chief executive of the beleaguered blood-analysis firm Theranos in Palo Alto, California, has been banned by US regulators from running a lab for two years and fined an unspecified amount. The 7 July announcement is the latest misfortune for the Silicon Valley company, which rose to prominence with promises of a technology that could perform a wide variety of diagnostic tests from a few drops of blood. But its bold claims faced scepticism and government scrutiny following investigations last year.

Web of Science sale

Major news and information company Thomson Reuters announced on 11 July that

it will sell its intellectual-property and science division, including its subscription-based Web of Science citation databases, to two private-equity firms for US\$3.55 billion. The company has long been expected to part with the division, which employs some 3,200 people, to focus on its core businesses of financial, trade and regulatory information. Industry observers expect the equity firms — Onex Corporation and Baring Private Equity Asia — to break up the division and resell the parts at a profit.

POLICY

Care.data killed off

The UK health department announced on 6 July that it is abandoning care.data, a controversial programme of the National Health Service in England that would have centralized medical records and potentially made them available to researchers. Public misgivings over the protection of patient information delayed the launch of care.data in 2014, and in 2015 the UK government launched two independent reviews of the programme. Those reviews, also released on 6 July, called for new data-security standards and proposed a different model for how

COMING UP

11–20 JULY

The United Nations holds a High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York City.
go.nature.com/29h7y7t

16 JULY

A Russian Soyuz rocket launches from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to deliver cargo to the International Space Station.

patients can consent to, or opt out of, sharing their health records.

EVENTS

Brexit woes abound

UK researchers continue to struggle with the uncertainty created by the country's 23 June vote to leave the European Union. Theresa May, former Home Secretary who was confirmed this week as Britain's new prime minister, said that the future right to residence for EU nationals working in the United Kingdom is not guaranteed. This includes 15% of the academic workforce. In other news, the Russell Group of leading UK universities expressed concern on 5 July about racism since the referendum. And life-sciences minister George Freeman has enlisted two drug-company bosses, GlaxoSmithKline's Andrew Witty and AstraZeneca's Pascal Soriot, to co-chair a Life Science Steering Group with him. It will produce recommendations on how to deal with post-referendum issues. See go.nature.com/29slyz for more.

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TREND WATCH

The world is eating more fish than ever — with farmed, rather than wild-caught, animals driving the increase, reveals a report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, out on 7 July. In 2014, people ate an average of 20.1 kilograms of fish, up from 9.9 kg per year in the 1960s. But wild fish stocks are also being increasingly overexploited. In 1974, 90% of wild stocks were being fished sustainably; by 2013, this had declined to 68.6%. See go.nature.com/29cvzf for more.

THE SINKING SUSTAINABILITY OF FISH STOCKS

Despite good practice in some areas, the world's marine fish stocks are increasingly overfished.

- Overfished at unsustainable levels
- Fully fished within sustainable levels
- Underfished

