

Best of Last Week – Cassini crashes into Saturn, a skin patch to treat obesity and reversing damage from marijuana use

September 18 2017, by Bob Yirka



This illustration shows Cassini above Saturn's northern hemisphere prior to one of its 22 Grand Finale dives. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(ScienceX)—It was a very good week for space science as a team of [Mars research subjects emerged a Mars-like habitat at a remote Hawaii volcano after eight months of isolation](#)—the NASA backed project was meant to mimic life on the red planet for the participants. Also, a team from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, conducted [a new supernova analysis that reframes the dark energy debate](#). They suggest the expansion of the universe might be an illusion.

An international team used Hubble to [capture a blistering pitch-black planet](#)—WASP-12b. Also, a team with members from the University of Sheffield and Queen's University Belfast reported that they had observed [the largest solar flare in 12 years](#) and the eighth largest in recorded history. And NASA's Cassini spacecraft made headlines as [it made a fiery, final dive](#) and disintegrated in Saturn's atmosphere.

In other news, a team with members from Germany and the European Synchrotron conducted a study and found that [nanoparticles from tattoos circulate inside the body](#)—some of which wind up in lymph nodes. It is still not known if they cause health problems. And a team at the Georgia Institute of Technology reported on how they had developed a system in which [an artificial intelligence, using less than two minutes of videogame footage, recreated a game engine](#), perhaps signaling a way to speed up the process of creating new games. Also, a team led by a group at McMaster University reported that they had found evidence showing [antidepressants to be associated with a significant elevated risk of death](#) by causing organ failure. And a team with members from Columbia University Medical Center and the University of North Carolina announced that they had developed [a microneedle skin patch that delivers a fat-shrinking drug locally and can be used to treat obesity and diabetes](#)—by turning white fat into brown fat.

And finally, if you are among the many who smoked a lot of marijuana in your youth and worry about what impact it might now be having on you, a team at Western University could alleviate your fears. They found a way [to reverse the negative effects of adolescent marijuana use](#) by administering drugs that activated a neurotransmitter called GABA in the prefrontal cortex region of the brain.

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