

Best of Last Week: Devices that disappear, a robotic thread and weight loss with intermittent fasting

September 2 2019, by Bob Yirka



Credit: Almansouri et al.

It was a good week for technology research, as a team at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology demonstrated [a biocompatible magnetic skin that could enable new wearable systems](#)—the skin cover allows for tracking movement with a nearby monitor. And a team at MIT developed what they described as [a robotic thread designed to slip through the brain's blood vessels](#)—it can be moved and steered using external magnets. Also, a team at the Georgia Institute of Technology, working on a contract with the Department of Defense, announced that they had created [devices that disappear on command after military missions](#)—the devices were made of polymers that self-destruct when exposed to a ceiling temperature.

It was also a good week for Earth science as an international team of researchers found evidence of [an ancient die-off approximately two billion years ago greater than the dinosaur extinction](#). The event was linked to declining [oxygen levels](#) in the atmosphere. And another international team of researchers found [evidence of a past high-level sea rise](#)—speleothems in coastal caves showed sea levels as much as 16 meters higher than today approximately 3 million years ago.

In other news, researchers at Harvard University developed [a new theory that draws connections between Planckian metals and black holes](#)—possibly leading to unknown aspects of quantum physics. And a team of chemists at Stanford University found that [water microdroplets spontaneously produce hydrogen peroxide](#)—they suggest it happens as a strong electric field near the surface of microdroplets triggers hydroxyl molecules to bind into hydrogen peroxide. Also, nutritionist Emma Derbyshire, with Nutritional Insight, published an article in the *British*

Medical Journal, pointing out that [a suggested move to plant-based diets risks worsening choline deficiency](#)—choline is a nutrient vital for brain health. And a team with members from the Department of Energy's SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and Stanford University announced [the first report of superconductivity in a nickel oxide material](#).

And finally, if you are one of the many millions around the world trying to lose weight, you might want to check out a study conducted by an international team of researchers—they found that [intermittent fasting or a 'fast and feast' diet, works for weight loss](#).

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