

Best of Last Week: Bizarre vole genetics, Skyborg flies, and insulin resistance

May 24 2021, by Bob Yirka



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

It was a good week for biological research, as a team affiliated with multiple institutions around the U.S. solved [a bizarre rodent genetics mystery and revealed another](#)—they found that the X and Y

chromosomes of the creeping vole fused in its past, leading to differences from other mammals. Now they want to know why. Also, a team at the University of Cambridge found that [mothers can influence their offspring's height, lifespan and disease risk through variants in their mitochondria](#).

In technology news, German car parts company Mahle announced that the company was developing [a magnet-free electric motor that will not require rare earth elements](#). Also, the U.S. Air Force announced that its [Skyborg UAV had completed its first flight](#)—the drone represents the beginning of an initiative aimed at marrying manned and unmanned drone capabilities. And Polish company Saule Technologies announced that it had opened [a cutting-edge solar energy plant](#)—one that is based on perovskite technology. Also, a team at University College London found that [use of a robotic "third thumb" can alter the brain's representation of the hand](#).

In other news, Weifeng Shi and George Gao, both of whom are affiliated with multiple institutions in China recommended security measures after [Russian farm workers were infected with a crossover flu virus](#) last year, suggesting the possibility of another pandemic. Also, a team at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory found that [recycling could give new purpose to spent nuclear fuel](#) used in power plants by separating its ingredients. And a team at Cornell University developed [a means for seeing atoms at record resolution](#)—in addition to doubling the previous record, the new method also allows for study of 3D materials.

And finally, if you are one of the millions of people around the world with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease or diabetes Type II, you may want to check out a study conducted by a team at the David Geffen School of Medicine—they found that [blocking ABCB10 protein production in liver cells protected against insulin resistance](#), and in so doing, reduced the symptoms of fatty liver disease.

© 2021 Science X Network

Citation: Best of Last Week: Bizarre vole genetics, Skyborg flies, and insulin resistance (2021, May 24) retrieved 5 July 2025 from

<https://sciencex.com/news/2021-05-week-bizarre-vole-genetics-skyborg.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.