

Best of Last Week—New agents to fight COVID, Pfizer vaccine safety confirmed, flavonoid-rich foods help blood pressure

August 30 2021, by Bob Yirka

Peptoids (blue, left) pierce the protective coat of a virus, causing its disintegration and inactivation (right). Credit: Maxwell Biosciences

It was a good week for the biological sciences as a team at Maxwell Biosciences reported on their work that involved developing [new agents](#)

[that work against viruses that cause such diseases as COVID-19 and herpes](#). They have been focusing on creating synthetic peptides to bolster those that are part of the immune system. Also, a team with members affiliated with several institutions in the U.K. found that [LED streetlights contribute to insect population declines](#), partly due to insects laying fewer eggs and partly due to over-eating. And a team of researchers from the U.S. and the U.K. learned [something new about the physics behind a water bear's lumbering gait](#).

It was another good week for technology research as well, as an international team developed [a way to increase storage capacity of rechargeable batteries by six times](#). The alkali metal-chlorine batteries work by making back-and-forth chemical conversions. Also, a team working at Loughborough University [found a missing piece in the solar panel puzzle](#) that they believe could lead to more efficient technology. And a team at the Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology developed [a new 3D printing ink that could be used to create tiny thermo-generators](#). Also, a combined group from the Technical University of Munich, Zhejiang University and Johns Hopkins University developed [a vision-based robotic system for 3D ultrasound imaging](#).

In other news, a pair of researchers, Andrea Mazzino with the University of Genova and Marco Edoardo Rosti with OIST, Japan [uncovered some secrets of COVID-19 transmission](#) that were revealed in turbulent puffs, using simulations running on a supercomputer. Also, the Clalit Research Institute, working with researchers from Harvard University, conducted [the largest real-world study of the Pfizer/BioNTech BNT162B2 COVID-19 vaccine](#) and found it to be safe.

And finally, if you have high blood pressure, you may want to check out work done by a team with members from institutions in Germany and Northern Ireland. They found [a link between gut bacteria and flavonoid-rich foods that could be used to reduce blood pressure levels](#).

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