

Best of Last Week – Global temperatures unprecedented, fusion ignition, older people have more COVID antibodies

November 15 2021, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for earth science, as a trio of researchers from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Yale University and The University of Texas at Austin revealed [the fate of sinking tectonic plates](#). Some are significantly weakened as they sink, T. V. Gerya, D. Bercovici

and T. W. Becker noted, but not so much that they break apart entirely. Also, a team with members from several institutions in the U.S. found that [global temperatures over the last 24,000 years show today's warming is "unprecedented."](#) And an international team found clues on the bed of the Atlantic Ocean [that help explain why glacial cycles intensified 1 million years ago.](#)

In technology news, a team at South China University of Technology announced [a compound that may enable sustainable, cost-effective, large-scale energy storage.](#) And a team with members from Vector Institute, the University of Waterloo and the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics developed [a neural-network-based optimization technique inspired by the principle of annealing.](#) A team with members from the Polytechnic Institute of Paris and the University of Lyon developed [a self-supervised strategy to train deep despeckling networks,](#) which they have named MERLIN. Researchers from Franklin & Marshall College demonstrated [a technique that allows robots to detect when humans need help](#) by processing social cues.

In other news, a team of researchers from several institutions in the U.S. and New Zealand revealed [surprising findings on how salt affects blood flow in the brain](#)—it is reduced in the hypothalamus when sodium levels are high. And scientists working at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's National Ignition Facility announced that they were [at the brink of fusion ignition.](#)

And finally, if you have been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, you may want to check out the results of work done by a team with members affiliated with a host of institutions in Canada. They [found that for those who have been infected by the virus, the older they are the more antibodies they have.](#)

Citation: Best of Last Week – Global temperatures unprecedented, fusion ignition, older people have more COVID antibodies (2021, November 15) retrieved 9 July 2025 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2021-11-week-global-temperatures-unprecedented-fusion.html>

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