

# Best of Last Week—Unknown structure in galaxy, new skin for robots, supplements slow macular degeneration

June 6 2022, by Bob Yirka

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Credit: California Institute of Technology

It was a good week for space science as a team of researchers at NASA announced that they were looking forward to getting a glimpse of [a world that constantly burns](#). The James Webb telescope will soon focus

on 55 Cancri e, an exoplanet so close to its star that its surface is likely covered in lava. Also, a team of space researchers affiliated with several institutions in Japan analyzing data from ALMA discovered [an unknown structure in the galaxy](#) courtesy of high contrast imaging. And a team of astronomers in Australia detected [a new radio source of unknown origin emanating from somewhere in the spiral galaxy NGC 2082](#).

In technology news, a team at the University of Houston developed [an alternative to lithium batteries](#)—a solid-state sodium-sulfur battery that works at ambient temperatures. A team working at the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory developed [an electrolyte additive that offers a lithium battery performance breakthrough](#)—specifically, a lithium difluorophosphate that allows for improvements in low-temperature battery performance. And a team at California Institute of Technology developed [an artificial skin that gives robots a sense of touch](#). It can also sense pressure, temperature and whether a given material is toxic. Amar Singh, an assistant professor at Banaras Hindu University, [explored the differences between intelligence and consciousness in future artificial beings by drawing parallels between them in the fantasy film "Being John Malkovich."](#)

In other news, a team of researchers from several institutions in the U.S., China and the U.K. reported that [a person's height can impact their risk of several diseases](#). Tall people, for example, were found to be more at risk for atrial fibrillation but at less risk of heart disease. Also, a team at the Foundation for Applied Molecular Evolution made [a breakthrough in determining life's origins on Earth, and perhaps on Mars](#). And finally, in a study funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, a team from several institutions in the U.S. confirmed the [benefit of taking OTC supplements to slow age-related macular degeneration](#).

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