

Best of Last Week—neutering dogs shortens lifespan, AI emotional support app, exercise reduces Parkinson's symptoms

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It was a good week for biology research as a multi-institutional team of evolutionary biologists conducted a genetic study that showed a Stone Age strategy that [prevented inbreeding](#)—unrelated families living

together. Also, a pair of researchers at James Cook University, one a public health specialist, the other a bioengineer, found evidence that neutering Rottweilers [shortens their lifespan](#). Carolynne Joonè and Dmitry Konovalov found reductions of a year and a half for males, and one year for females. And a team of medical researchers at the University of Alberta uncovered what they describe as [a universal DNA code](#) driving the formation of all cell membranes.

In technology news, a team of health scientists at ETH Zurich developed a way to use a food industry byproduct to [recover gold from electronic waste](#). They created a sponge made from a food protein matrix to pull out the precious metal. And a team of materials scientists at RMIT University fabricated a [3D-printed titanium structure](#) with unusual strength. The metamaterial was printed with a unique lattice structure that was 50% stronger than any others of its kind. Also, a team of AI researchers at Hefei University of Technology and Hefei Comprehensive National Science Center created an AI system that [offers emotional support via chat](#)—it engages in emotional conversations, the team claims, to offer low-cost and basic psychological support. And a team of chemists at the University of Texas at Austin, working with a colleague from Argonne National Laboratory, developed [a fire-resistant sodium battery](#) that balances safety, cost and performance.

In other news, a team of epidemiologists at King's College London conducted a study that found older people taking daily fiber supplements had [improved brain function](#) in just 12 weeks. Also, an international team of oceanographers posted a video showing a lone orca [killing and eating a great white shark](#)—a possible sign that orcas are adapting to a changing ocean. And finally, a team of medical researchers affiliated with multiple institutions in the U.S. found that high-intensity exercise can [reverse neurodegeneration in Parkinson's patients](#).

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