

Top 10 of 2012: Science & Health

Yale UniversityYale University

Based on the interest and attention they gathered at Yale and beyond, here are the year's top 10 Science & Health stories:

1. [Yale scientists explain how ketamine vanquishes depression within hours](#) [1]

Hands-down, the most-read story of the year — with 14,000-plus readers — looked at how a party drug known as “Special K” could dramatically lower depression. Readers were also interested in the news that stress — even [healthy stress](#) [2]— can [shrink the brain](#) [2].

2. [Exhaustive family tree for birds shows recent, rapid diversification](#) [3]

Bird lovers were undoubtedly among the over 5,000 readers who made this the second-highest story in the Science & Health channel. And speaking of birds, ancient ones had [wing feathers that were a serious drag](#) [4]. The work by Yale researchers to create a [“Map of Life”](#) [5] also scored well with readers.

3. [Cell phone use in pregnancy may cause behavioral disorders in offspring](#) [6]

Stories about pregnancy and childbirth attracted thousands of readers, especially ones on the differences between [natural birth and C-section on the development of brain-boosting proteins](#) [7] and the fact that [women cannot rewind the “biological clock.”](#) [8]

4. [Yale researchers making headway in quest to solve autism’s mysteries](#) [9]

A page devoted to the diverse studies of autism underway at Yale was visited by over 2,500 readers. Additions to that page this year included stories about [genetic mutations at conception](#) [10] that are linked to autism and the impact of [new diagnostic criteria](#) [11]for the disease.

5. [Nearby super-Earth likely a diamond planet](#) [12]

The discovery of a diamond-encrusted planet lured star-struck readers, as did the news of a [planet with four suns](#) [13] and [two planets so close that it stuns even astronomers](#) [14].

6. [Yale’s new innovation and design center to foster ‘culture of engineering’](#) [15]

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The Becton-based center attracted the attention of both readers and those who pass by the first-floor facility. In other facilities-based news, the [Center for Science and Social Science opened](#) [16] on Science Hill, and [Yale School of Nursing is moving to West Campus](#) [17].

7. [New antibody drug engages the immune system in fight against cancer](#) [18]

Cancer-related stories, especially discoveries that could lead to new treatments, were of interest to many readers. These include the discovery that an [antibody found in lupus may protect against certain cancers](#) [19] and a way to [save blood from the ravages of chemo treatment](#) [20].

8. [Diamond in the rough: Half-century puzzle solved](#) [21]

The fascination with all things diamond also drew readers to this story about the synthesis of a cold-compressed graphite material that is as hard as its natural counterpart.

9. [Addicts' cravings have different roots in men and women](#) [22]

Studies of the roots of substance abuse — including [cocaine's effect on the teen brain](#) [23] and the [neurons that drive both overeating and cocaine use](#) [24] — also drew many readers.

10. [Yale one of first institutions to get powerful new DNA sequencing technology](#) [25]

Studies based on DNA sequencing this year revealed that [small genetic differences matter](#) [26], that [nobody is genetically perfect](#) [27], and that the Galapagos turtle known as [Lonesome George may not have been the last of his species](#) [28].

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<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2012/12/top-10-2012-science-health>

Links:

[1] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/04/yale-scientists-explain-how-ketamine-vanquishes-depression-within-hours>

[2] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/01/09/even-healthy-stress-causes-brain-shrink-yale-study-shows>

[3] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/31/exhaustive-family-tree-birds-shows-recent-rapid-diversification>

[4] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/11/21/ancient-birds-wing-feathers-were-serious-drag>

[5] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/05/10/map-life-aims-show-all-living-things-planet>

[6] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/03/15/cell-phone-use-pregnancy-may-cause-behavioral-disorders-offspring>

[7] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/08/08/natural-birth-not-c-section-triggers-brain-boosting-proteins>

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- [8] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/04/05/women-cannot-rewind-biological-clock>
- [9] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/09/13/yale-researchers-making-headway-quest-solve-autism-s-mysteries>
- [10] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/04/04/genetic-mutations-conception-linked-many-cases-autism>
- [11] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/04/10/autism-numbers-yale-researchers-examine-impact-new-diagnostic-criteria>
- [12] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/11/nearby-super-earth-likely-diamond-planet>
- [13] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/15/armchair-astronomers-find-planet-four-star-system>
- [14] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/06/21/proximity-new-planets-stuns-even-astronomers>
- [15] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/02/17/yale-s-new-innovation-and-design-center-foster-culture-engineering>
- [16] <http://news.yale.edu/2011/11/28/center-science-and-social-science-information-open-science-hill>
- [17] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/05/03/yale-school-nursing-moving-university-s-west-campus>
- [18] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/06/02/new-antibody-drug-engages-immune-system-fight-against-cancer-0>
- [19] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/24/antibody-found-lupus-may-protect-against-certain-cancers>
- [20] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/18/yale-team-finds-way-save-blood-ravages-chemo-treatment>
- [21] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/07/19/diamond-rough-half-century-puzzle-solved>
- [22] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/01/30/addicts-cravings-have-different-roots-men-and-women>
- [23] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/02/21/cocaine-and-teen-brain-yale-research-offers-insights-addiction>
- [24] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/06/24/neurons-control-overeating-also-drive-appetite-cocaine>
- [25] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/01/10/yale-one-first-institutions-get-powerful-new-dna-sequencing-technology>
- [26] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/10/31/lessons-1000-genomes-small-differences-matter>
- [27] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/02/16/yale-study-proves-nobody-genetically-perfect>
- [28] <http://news.yale.edu/2012/11/15/dna-tests-show-lonesome-george-may-not-have-been-last-his-species>