



» The month in science

Stay up to date with our handy digest of the

NEUROSCIENCE

» SCIENTISTS IN MEMORY SHOCKER!

Zapping your brain with electricity while you sleep improves your memory. Researchers at the University of Lübeck in Germany asked students to memorise a list of words before sleeping. More words were recalled after **some light electrical stimulation**. Scientists think electrical currents can enhance natural fluctuations between brain cells.



<http://tinyurl.com/y58kxw>

BIOLOGY

» PROTEINS: INTO THE FOLD

Scientists could gain insights to disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's by **mapping the way proteins transform** from a chain of amino acids into three-dimensional structures. A new computer model developed at Harvard University can, for the first time, predict how a protein will 'fold'. The research has implications for neurodegenerative disorders caused by misfolded proteins.

www.harvard.edu/gazette/

PALAEONTOLOGY

» HUMANS AND NEANDERTHALS, SITTING IN A TREE...

Fossils found in Romania in 1952 support theories that humans and Neanderthals interbred. New analysis and radiocarbon dating show the 30,000-year-old bones had a mix of



features. Researchers from Washington University believe a complex **interbreeding pattern occurred as humans** spread across Europe some 35,000 years ago.

<http://news-info.wustl.edu/>

SPACE

» ROCKET TAKES SHAPE

Chinese engineers are busy constructing the country's next spacecraft. Shenzhou 7 is scheduled for launch in 2008, when three

astronauts will carry out **China's first ever space-walk**, influenced by Russian Soyuz spacecraft, Shenzhou 7 will include a pressure cabin where astronauts prepare before heading outside.

<http://tinyurl.com/skrlk>

GENETICS

» FIGHTING FLU

Researchers are closing in on the reasons that flu kills some people and not others. Scientists at Southern Illinois University are investigating immune reactions in the lungs of mice that have contracted different strains of influenza. If they can track down **the genes responsible for the strength** of the reaction, doctors may be able to develop anti-viral medicines for strains like H5N1.

www.the-aps.org



If this woman lived in a developing country, she would have had fewer sexual partners but more unsafe sex

Let's talk about sex

» Get rid of your preconceptions. Married people do it more than teenagers, people aren't losing their virginity earlier, and promiscuity isn't linked to sexually transmitted diseases. These are just a few of the surprising findings to come out of the first global study to probe deep into mankind's sexual behaviour.

Researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have been analysing data on condom use, age at first sexual intercourse and number of sexual partners for people from 59 countries over the last decade. They found that multiple partnerships are more common in developed nations, rather than in developing countries that have a high incidence of HIV or sexually transmitted infections. This suggests that poverty and gender inequality are more important in causing sexual health problems than promiscuity.

Professor Kaye Wellings, who co-authored the research, told *BBC Focus*: "Although the number of multiple partnerships was higher in industrialised countries, condom use was also higher, which offset things."

As well as dispelling popular myths, the study will help to shape policies aimed at improving sexual health around the world.

<http://www.lshim.ac.uk>