

ACSH's 10 Most Popular Articles of 2017



By Alex Berezow, PhD — December 21, 2017



Credit: Storyblocks [1]

We've been hard at work this year informing you of the latest developments in biomedical science, debunking junk science and bogus health claims, and explaining the science behind the headlines.

In case you missed them, or if you'd simply like a reminder of the year that has just passed, here are the 10 most popular articles we wrote in 2017.

#10. [Suicides In Rural America Increased More Than 40% In 16 Years](#) [2]. America's economy is shifting from small-town America to the cities, and at the same time, the opioid overdose epidemic has hit rural states, like Kentucky and West Virginia, especially hard. Perhaps as a result, from 1999 to 2015, suicides in rural America have increased over 40%, according to the CDC.

#9. [Does Saffron Fight Cancer? A Plausible Biological Mechanism](#) [3]. New research suggests that saffron -- a spice used in some Asian, Indian and Mediterranean dishes -- may have an intrinsic ability to fight cancer. But don't get too excited. Research on antioxidants suggests the same thing, but they fail in clinical trials.

#8. [Peanut-Free School Zones Don't Work](#) [4]. Over-the-top responses to peanuts are not uncommon. Parents are under the impression that the mere whiff of a peanut is enough to send some kids to the emergency room. But that's simply not true.

#7. [Two Fungal Species Cooperate To Synthesize An Antibiotic](#) [5]. Researchers discovered that when grown in co-culture, two different species of the fungus *Penicillium* -- the same genus that produces the antibiotic penicillin -- cooperate to synthesize an antibiotic that neither species produces when grown alone.

#6. [Infographic: The Best And Worst Science News Sites](#) [6]. Not only is science journalism

susceptible to the same sorts of biases that afflict regular journalism, but it's uniquely vulnerable to outrageous sensationalism – this or that will either cure cancer or kill us all. So to promote good outlets while castigating the bad, we partnered with RealClearScience to create a handy chart.

#5. [New Model Predicts Which Mentally Ill Patients Are Unlikely To Be Violent](#) [7]. High-profile incidents in which a mentally ill person commits a violent crime has led to the stereotype that these struggling people all pose a dire threat to society. But a team of researchers, studying data from more than 75,000 patients, has developed a model that accurately predicts which patients are *unlikely* to become violent.

#4. [Sonochemical Synthesis: Did Life Originate Inside Collapsing Bubbles?](#) [8] The origin of life is a profound mystery. Once life arose, natural selection and evolution took over. But the question of how a mixture of various gases created life-giving molecules that arranged into structures capable of reproducing themselves remains unanswered.

#3. [Ethanol: A Lethal Injection For Tumors](#) [9]. Injecting an ethanol-based gel directly into a specific type of tumor, called squamous cell carcinoma, resulted in a 100% cure rate in a hamster model.

#2. [A Molecule In Bees' Royal Jelly Promotes Wound Healing](#) [10]. Royal jelly contains a molecule that promotes wound healing. But don't rush to the local natural remedy store quite yet.

#1. [Why Dragonfly Wings Kill Bacteria](#) [11]. It is widely believed that a microscopic "bed of nails" surface destroys bacteria by puncturing their cell walls. But new research, using a variety of microscopic techniques, shows that an entirely different killing mechanism may be at play.

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