

TWAS NEWSLETTER

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IN THE NEWS

GM mosquitoes cut dengue, company says

The first evidence of the health effects of releasing genetically modified mosquitoes into the environment suggests that they could put a dent in the number of dengue cases.

This news comes from a year's worth of disease data from Brazil, says biotech company Oxitec, which engineered the mosquitoes. Oxitec's genetically modified line of *Ae. aegypti* mosquito males sire offspring with built-in self-destruct DNA that kills the new generation off in the wild before they begin to bite.

Science News:

www.bit.ly/29QVBbP

Data gaps hide HIV

Large pockets of HIV infection are not acknowledged due to a lack of data on global HIV occurrence and prevention efforts, a study has found.

Existing data don't adequately account for adolescent girls, young women, homosexual men and transgender people in HIV/AIDS-affected countries, says a report issued in June. These gaps in data sets result from cultural, geographical and educational factors, the report says. For example, in many of the countries most afflicted by HIV/AIDS, women are less likely to be educated and more likely to live rurally, so they rarely participate in surveys.

SciDevNet:

www.bit.ly/29XeUA3

China's coal peak hailed

The global battle against climate change has passed a historic turning point as China's coal burning has finally peaked.

China is the world's biggest polluter and more than tripled its coal burning from 2000 to 2013, emitting billions of tonnes of climate-warming carbon dioxide. But its coal consumption

peaked in 2014, much earlier than expected, and then began falling, a team of senior economists said in an analysis published in *Nature Geoscience*.

The Guardian:

www.bit.ly/2ae8zov



Amazon rainforest more flammable

Activities such as selective logging, hunting, altering or fragmenting the landscape, and other forms of habitat degradation are making the Amazon rainforest more flammable, according to a two-year study of the Brazilian Amazon. The findings, published in the journal *Nature*, revealed that even protected forest is degraded by human activity. "Rainforests don't normally burn, but human activities are making them much more flammable," said lead researcher Jos Barlow from the Lancaster Environment Centre.

Down to Earth:

www.bit.ly/2bHIE4W

Running out of groundwater

In some Beijing neighbourhoods, the ground is giving way at a rate of four inches a year as water in the giant aquifer below the city is pumped. The groundwater has been so depleted that China's capital city, home to more than 20 million people, could face serious disruptions in its rail system, roadways, and building foundations, an international team of scientists concluded. Around the world, alarms are being sounded about the depletion of underground water supplies. The United Nations predicts a global shortfall in water by 2030.

National Geographic:

www.bit.ly/29UFkbb