China scientists identified a molecular cluster that they have dubbed ‘volleyballene’. It consists of a combination of carbon pentagons and scandium atoms, with the formula \( \text{Sc}_{20} \text{C}_{60} \). Its name derives from the space-filling model of its atoms looking similar to a volleyball.

Food scientists studying how caramel's composition can affect how it flows have discovered that it is rubber-like both in its structure and flow behaviour. In the caramel, cross-linked milk protein polymers form a large network, in which small droplets of fat are dotted.

A new technique uses gold nanoparticles to hunt down tumours. The nanoparticles are designed to build up in cancer cells, and are then irradiated with an infrared laser. This causes them to produce ‘nanobubbles’ which explode cancer cells, without damage to others.

Experts have derided the claims of a group of Argentinian physicians that pyriproxyfen, a larvicide added to water to kill mosquito larvae, is responsible for Brazil’s current microcephaly outbreak. The outbreak has been linked to the Zika virus currently afflicting the region.

Scientists have reported successful pre-clinical testing of a vaccine against the synthetic opioid fentanyl, a commonly used ‘designer drug’. It mimics fentanyl's structure, causing the body to create antibodies which then stop fentanyl reaching the brain, blocking its toxic effects.