

Podcast: Retracted hydroxychloroquine-COVID studies backlash; Obesity cancer drugs? 'Unbiased' Guardian takes animal rights money

Two major studies which found that the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine doesn't treat COVID-19 have been retracted. What does that mean for the drug—and the peer-review process? UK newspaper the Guardian accepted more than \$800,000 to publish an anti-farming investigation, which two biologists say is filled with inaccuracies. Has the coronavirus pandemic killed the public's interest in fad diets and junk science? Cancer drugs that target an "obesity" gene might help us stay slim without exercising or dieting.

Join geneticist Kevin Folta and GLP editor Cameron English on this episode of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- [Is hydroxychloroquine useless and dangerous, or not? Major study released last week dissing therapy now under scrutiny](#)

Based on the conclusions of two large studies published in the Lancet and the New England Journal of Medicine, experts have chastised President Donald Trump and a relative handful of physicians for claiming that hydroxychloroquine could treat COVID-19. Those papers have now been retracted following revelations that they were based on possibly manipulated (or even fabricated) data.

Surgisphere, the company that supplied data for the studies, [has so far refused](#) to let independent investigators see the raw numbers. Although other research indicates that the anti-malaria drug is still unlikely to be effective against the novel coronavirus, the retractions raise awkward questions about why the peer-review process didn't catch obvious problems with the two studies in the first place.

- [Viewpoint: News or propaganda? UK newspaper the Guardian paid over \\$800k to publish anti-farming 'investigation'](#)

Describing itself [as a source of](#) "open, honest, fearless journalism," UK newspaper the Guardian claims it's beholden to no "shareholders, advertisers or billionaire owners." Nonetheless, the paper recently ran a series of stories attacking animal agriculture, which it was paid well over \$800,000 to do by a non-profit with ties to the animal rights movement. Biologists Henry Miller and Rob Wager took notice, pointing out that the stories contained blatant scientific mistakes and presented a misleading analysis of modern food production.

- [Has coronavirus killed consumer interest in food fads and junk science?](#)

Consumer interest in "natural" cleaning products, gluten-free foods and other health and wellness fads has waned in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. But as the public slowly returns to normal life, the more important question to answer is: Will this pro-science change of heart last? We may have cause to be optimistic.

- [‘Thinness gene’ could offer genetically engineered weight control strategy](#)

Some people are naturally prone to weight gain. Others, meanwhile, stay slim no matter how little they exercise and how much they eat. A new study investigating the biological basis of this phenomenon has uncovered a gene that may have a major influence on our propensity to get fat. Because it also plays a role in cancer development, there are drugs designed to modulate its effects. Could these treatments also help obesity-prone individuals control their weight?

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