

THE CONVERSATION

**Taking research
beyond researchers**

The Conversation is:

- The world's largest publisher of original research-based content (source: [Altmetric](#))
- Non-profit, independent source of news analysis and expert opinion, written by academics working with professional journalists
- 8 editions operating in 12 countries worldwide
- Funded by 500+ university members and other partners

We offer:

1. Collaborative editorial support for academics
2. Media training for academics
3. Readership metrics to demonstrate reach and engagement with research

1. What we do: bring expertise to the public

- **Expert pieces written swiftly**

Analysis: 800 words on current affairs or new research, published in a few days to a week

Insights: long reads of up to 4,000 words on unpublished investigatory research of public interest, or compelling stories

Podcast: The Conversation Weekly, The Anthill (series podcast)

- **We make it easy**

Editorial support from the start.
Training sessions to help authors get to grips with it

- **Author approval**

Pieces must be signed off by the author



- **All content is open access, Creative Commons licensed**
Free to read, and free for others to republish. Syndicated through PA and Reuters news agencies

Lifecycle of a story

- Editor approach or author pitch
- Agree brief and commission
- Write and edit
- Approve and publish
- Republishing in other media leads to further traction
- Audience recorded on dashboard
- Post-publication engagement/impact recorded

The collage illustrates the lifecycle of a story through several interconnected screenshots:

- Top Left:** A draft article titled "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon". The text discusses the northern lights as a natural phenomenon and mentions recent reports from BBC. A red arrow points from this draft to the published version.
- Top Right:** A screenshot of the "Requirements" and "Collaborators" section, showing Miriam Frankel as the Editor and Nathan Case as the Lead Author.
- Middle Left:** A screenshot of a World Economic Forum article titled "The sun's activity is changing, and the Northern Lights will change as well. Here's why". A red arrow points from this article to the "All Post Publication Activity" dashboard.
- Middle Right:** A screenshot of the published article on "The Conversation" website, featuring a headline "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon" and a sub-headline "Predicting solar activity".
- Bottom Left:** A screenshot of the "All Post Publication Activity" dashboard. It shows a table of engagement events, including one created on February 10, 2017, for the article "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon". The engagement was created by a member of the general public (Mike Robins) and resulted in the article being published in the i newspaper. A red arrow points from this dashboard to the "Readers" chart.
- Bottom Right:** A screenshot of the "Readers" dashboard, showing a line chart of readership over time (2016-2018) and a pie chart of readers by country/territory. The pie chart shows a significant portion of readers from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Audience

In 2024 the UK edition saw:

118 million
pageviews

recorded Jan–Dec

3.1 million
monthly unique users

5.8 million
monthly pageviews

9.8 million
monthly pageviews of
UK edition content

including republication

- Around 80% of readership is outside UK and Ireland
- Anglosphere (US, UK, Canada, Australia, NZ, Ireland, South Africa) is largest audience
- Asia: India, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia
- Europe: France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Russia
- 18-34 age group makes up one third of readership

Engagement and impact

Articles in The Conversation
lead to follow-up for authors:

63%	were contacted by the media
18%	were contacted by NGOs, charities or campaigners
19%	were invited to or asked to speak at conferences
14%	contacted by policy makers, or asked to submit policy briefs
13%	were contacted by business or industry
18%	saw increased research citations
36%	used the article for teaching students
54%	discussed the topic with the public or colleagues

2024 highlights from Manchester's finest ...

1851 Research Fellow Dean Lomax wrote How a teenager helped identify a new species of giant marine reptile, which was read 100,500 times across France, Algeria and the UK.

Professor of Sociology Alice Bloch wrote Descendants of Holocaust survivors explain why they are replicating Auschwitz tattoos on their own bodies, which was read 62,000 times across the US, UK and Australia.

Director of Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics Michael Garrett wrote AI may be to blame for our failure to make contact with alien civilisations, which was read 61,000 times across the US, UK and Canada.

Professor of Astrophysics Benjamin Stappers co-wrote Black hole, neutron star or something new? We discovered an object that defies explanation, which was read 53,000 times across the US, UK and Canada.

The news value of academic expertise

Good starting points

- **News:** insight/analysis of current affairs, or new angles on current or old stories
- **Research:** discuss your new findings, or comment on other people's research
- **Timeless:** tell a story, answer a question, dive into an interesting topic
- **Surprising,** counterintuitive, contrary
- **Personal stories,** human interest
- **List format:** "Five things you don't know about...", "Ten reasons why..."

3. A journalistic approach

Think about your audience:

Intelligent, educated, curious

...but not interested in wading
through dense, academic prose

You don't have to 'dumb down'

...but ideas need to be expressed
clearly for non-specialist readers

What would *most interest the reader*?

It may or may not be what is most
academically interesting.

The 'top line' test

- You know you've got a good story if you can summarise it in one sentence
- Work out the best angle by identifying the most important or interesting aspect *to your readers*, and focusing on that
- Make a point or two - not all of them. Get used to leaving things out
- Tell me something I don't know...
- ...and tell me why it matters.

Why should I care?

Style and tone

- **Get to the point!**

Start at the end: latest events, findings, implications, conclusions.

- **Battle for the reader's attention**

from the opening sentence.

Get important elements in early on

- **Be clear, be direct, be concise**

Use active sentences, not passive.

Cut words ruthlessly

- **Polish your intro and payoff**

Write and re-write your opening and final lines until they sparkle, and speak directly to the subject – never “*more research is needed*”

- **Use plain English**

Get a feel for the informal – how you'd explain to a friend in the pub, or to a teenager

- **Offer examples**

Make the abstract concrete

- **Your piece should answer more questions than it poses:**

who, what, where, when, why – sometimes how

- **The reader does not know the subject like you do**

Explain (or avoid) technical terms. Don't assume the reader's knowledge

4. How to pitch editors

- **What's the story?**

In a nutshell, what are your conclusions or findings, or the takeaway for the reader? **Be succinct, be clear, be bold**

- **Why should the reader care?**

Why is it interesting or significant to readers that aren't specialists in the field?

- **Why now?**

What is it relevant to – breaking news?
A broad topic of current interest?
A recently published paper? A future event you're pitching in advance of?

- **The key points** of your argument (briefly)

- **Why are you the person to write this?**

What expertise informs your view?
What can you bring to the story?

A good pitch is written like a good story

A strong headline to interest the reader, opening lines compelling them to read on

The same rules apply

Be clear, be succinct, no jargon, don't assume the reader knows the topic

Convince us why what you want to write is important and interesting

Try to convey in your pitch some of the enthusiasm you have for your work

If you can make us like the story, together we can produce a piece that readers will like too.

Ready? Head to:

<https://theconversation.com/uk/pitches>

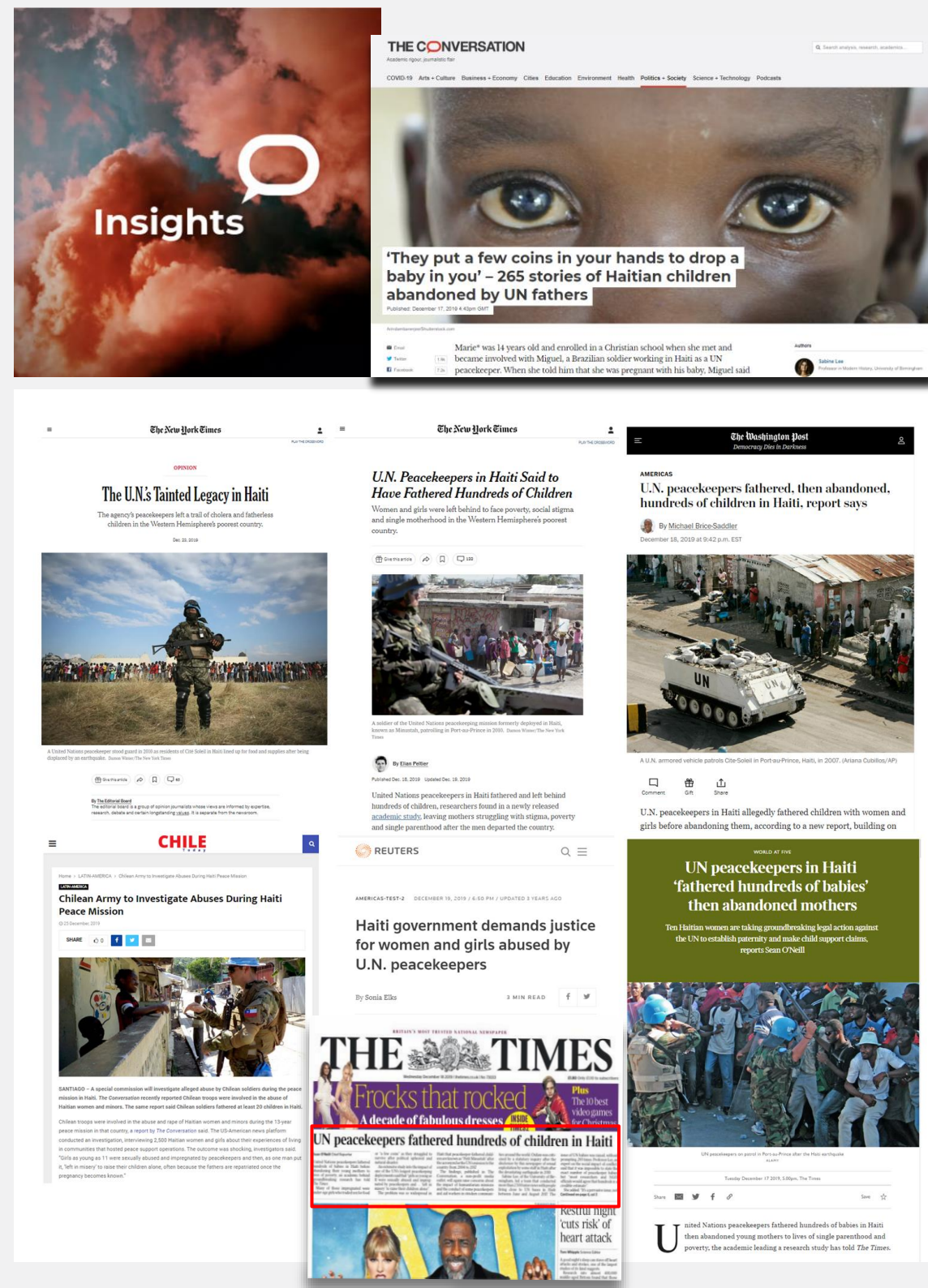
Insights

Long reads of up to 4,000 words.
Has to be a story that can hold the
reader over the full length.

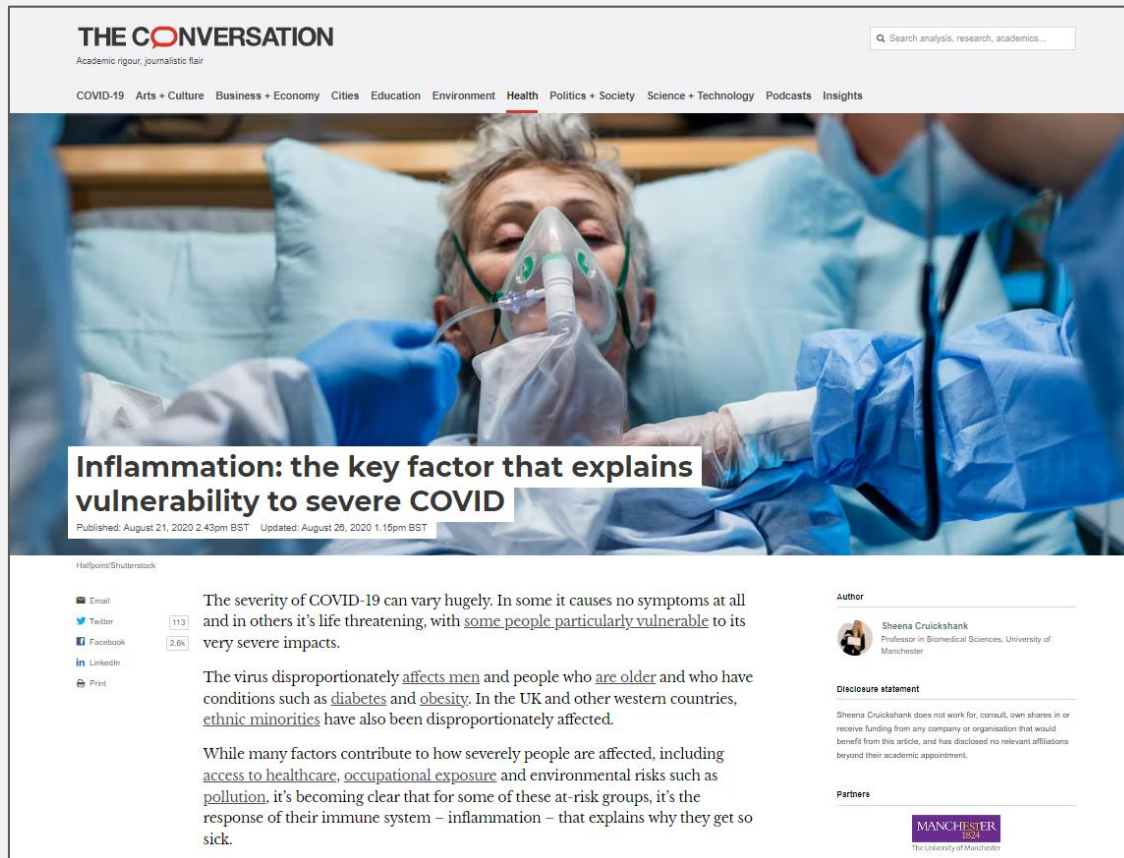
- Yet-to-be-published investigative research with news lines that are of strong public interest
- Human stories with compelling narrative arcs and case studies that grab readers' attention
- The 'inside story' of a researcher's journey, including personal ups-and-downs

Insights is run by journalists
Paul Keaveny and Mike Herd

insights@theconversation.com



Examples from Manchester authors



Sheena Cruickshank (1.7m reads, 24 articles)
Professor in Biomedical Sciences

Translated into French, in total 445,000 reads

Was republished by the World Economic Forum and RTÉ

Won 'best popular article written by a scientist or engineer' at the Association of British Science Writers awards.

Sheena has 1.5m reads from 19 articles.

"I have really enjoyed writing for The Conversation. I have learnt a lot about writing, and I really appreciate the partnership with the editors who give great advice and insight. The analytics page is really helpful for me to track metrics to report back to my university, and the reach of The Conversation is impressive."

One of my pieces was cited in a UK policy briefing and I have been approached for a couple of industry collaborations. I was also invited to join the Life Sciences Supermind, a worldwide group to consider issues linked to the pandemic based in US."



Do you want to live forever? Simon Serdar / Alamy Stock Photo

- Copy link
- Email
- X (Twitter)
- Bluesky
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- WhatsApp
- Print

Jeff Bezos is on a mission to conquer ageing. He has just recruited Hal Barron from GlaxoSmithKline to help lead Altos Labs, the ambitious new anti-ageing company with billions of investment. So what does science really say about this? Could we beat ageing?

Listen to this article

Speed + | -

00:00 / 05:06

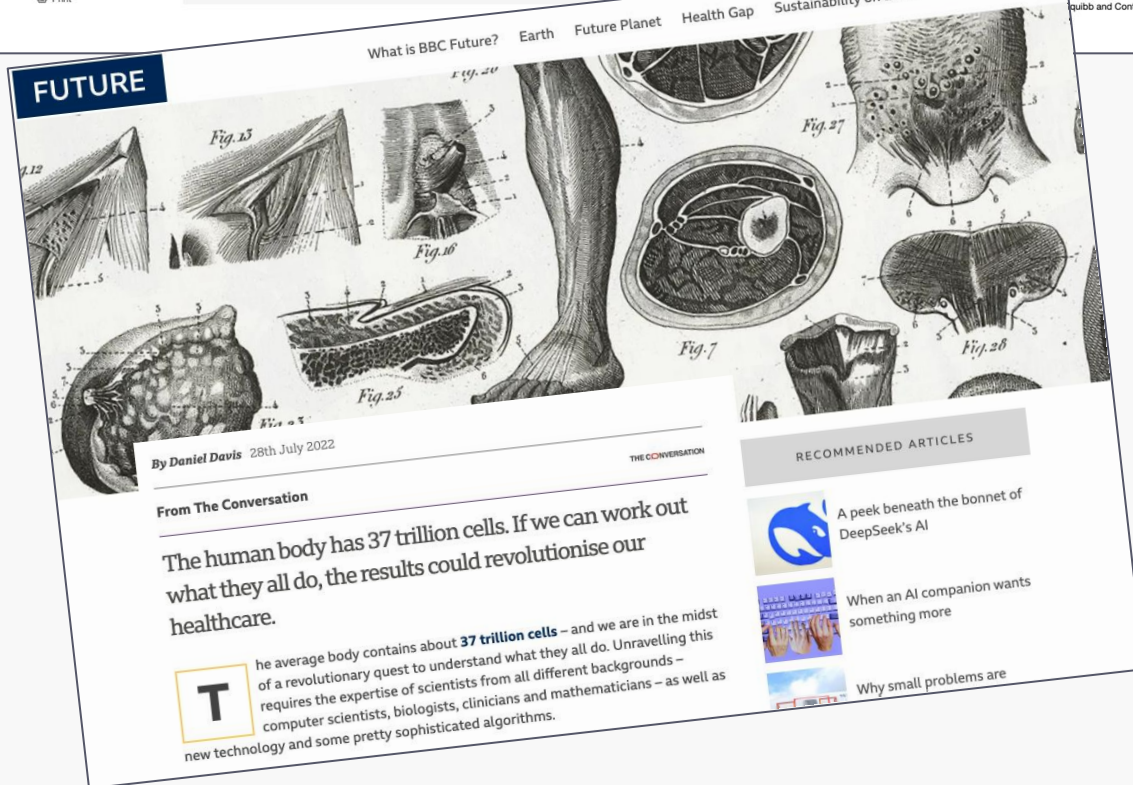
Author



Daniel M Davis
Professor of Immunology, University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

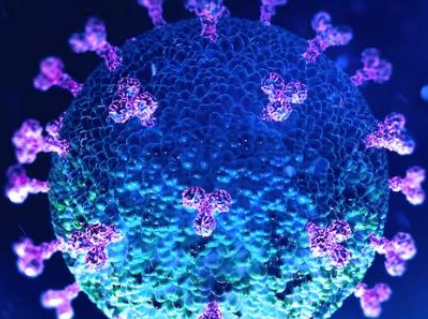
Shoestring More 



Examples from Manchester authors

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

COVID-19 Arts + Culture Business + Economy Cities Education Environment Health Politics + Society Science + Technology Podcasts Insights



Coronavirus: we must step up research to harness immense power of the immune system

Published: May 11, 2020 3.33pm BST

Andrii Vashchuk/Shutterstock

Email 33
Twitter 493
Facebook
LinkedIn
Print

Many countries are moving to exit a lockdown triggered by COVID-19, but the virus has not gone away and there are real concerns that a second wave of infection could happen. We urgently need to understand more about how the body deals with this infection and what we can do to tackle it. Immunology has taken centre stage here in revealing what happens when our body fights this virus, and brings us the possibility of treatments and vaccines.

One of the most amazing things about our immune system is that it can fight germs it has never encountered before. We understand much about how this works, and this detailed knowledge seeds ideas about how COVID-19 could be tackled with a vaccine or other types of drugs, such as those that have made AIDS a disease that can be controlled. But we must be under no illusion – it will take time. There are seven known types of coronavirus that infect humans and we don't have a vaccine against any of them.

Scientific understanding of COVID-19 is moving fast. We already know that the virus enters the body's cells through a protein on cells called ACE2. ACE2 is

Authors

Daniel M Davis
Professor of Immunology, University of Manchester

Sheena Cruickshank
Professor in Biomedical Sciences, University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

Daniel M Davis receives funding from The Wellcome Trust and is the author of *The Beautiful Cure*.

Sheena Cruickshank does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

Partners

MANCHESTER
The University of Manchester

Daniel M Davis
Professor of Immunology

Sheena Cruickshank
Professor in Biomedical Sciences

14,500 reads

The piece was included in the House of Commons briefing paper, *Coronavirus: Testing for Covid-19*. CBP 8897 on May 19, 2020.

Shows that even modestly-read pieces can be shared with key audiences and lead to impact



Descendants of Holocaust survivors explain why they are replicating Auschwitz tattoos on their own bodies

Published: January 25, 2024 10:54am GMT

Orly Weintraub Gilad with her grandfather's Auschwitz number, A-12599, tattooed on her arm. John Jeffay for The Conversation

Email
X (Twitter)
Facebook
LinkedIn
Print

Rony Cohen doesn't remember any particular moment when she first became aware of the number tattooed on her grandmother's arm. It was just always there.

Cohen says she felt as if she had experienced the Holocaust herself, in a different cycle of her own life. It featured in her dreams. It permeated family life, as did the self-imposed interdiction on talking about the past and the absence of relatives. The legacy of starvation was never far from the surface. Food was used to soothe. There was no waste. Her grandfather finished every crumb from every plate.

Author



Alice Bloch
Professor of Sociology, University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

Alice Bloch has received funding from British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Small Research grant in partnership with The Conversation Weekly.

Smithsonian
MAGAZINE

SUBSCRIBE RENEW SHOP

HISTORY | JANUARY 25, 2024

Why Descendants of Holocaust Survivors Are Replicating Auschwitz Tattoos

Those who choose to put the numbers on their bodies hope the act will spark conversation about the Holocaust and pay tribute to loved ones who survived

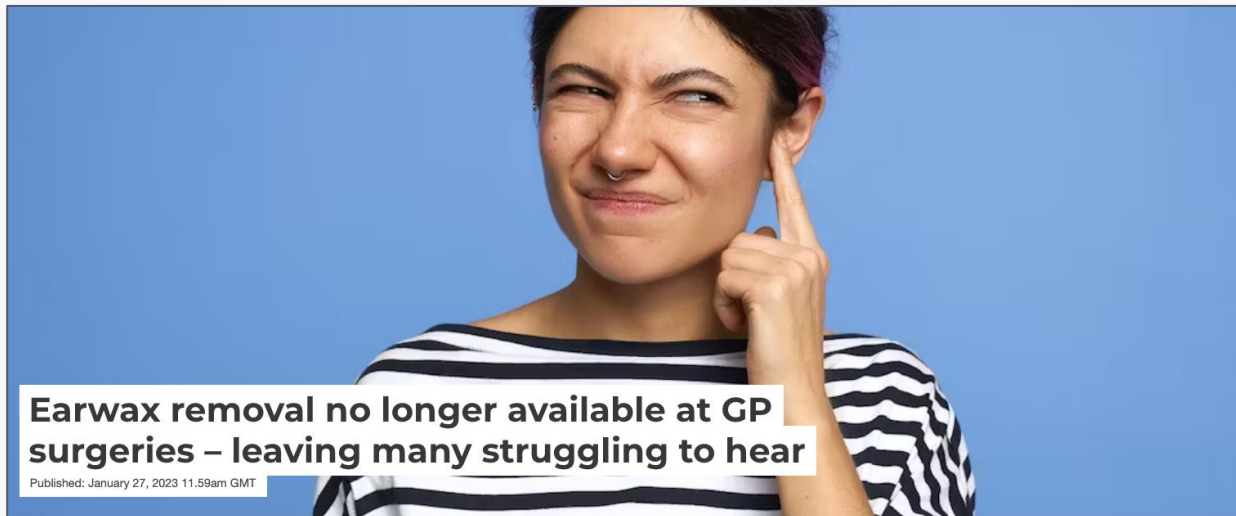


Orly Weintraub Gilad has her grandfather's Auschwitz number, A-12599, tattooed on her arm. John Jeffay for The Conversation

Alice Bloch, The Conversation

In January 2024 the descendants of Holocaust survivors explained why they had chosen to replicate the Auschwitz tattoos of their parents and grandparents. **Sociologist Alice Bloch, from the University of Manchester**, spent the past five years trying to unpack the potency of this gesture and her Insights long read gave some of her interviewees the opportunity to share their stories.

The project was also turned into an episode for The Conversation Weekly podcast and required photography and video commissions in Israel. The piece was co-published by The Smithsonian, was translated into Spanish, and has so far had over 60,000 reads on theconversation.com alone.



Earwax removal no longer available at GP surgeries – leaving many struggling to hear

Published: January 27, 2023 11:59am GMT

Anatoliy Karlyuk/Shutterstock

Email

X (Twitter) 23

Facebook 175


LinkedIn

Print

Each year, more than [2 million people in the UK](#) have troublesome earwax that needs to be removed. However, more people are finding that this service is no longer being provided at their GP surgery. In fact, 66% of people seeking these services have been told that earwax removal is [no longer available on the NHS](#).

[Questions have been raised in parliament](#) about why people are being referred to earwax clinics in hospitals. This results in long waiting times and is not the best use of specialist services.

Author



Kevin Munro
Ewing Professor of Audiology, University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

Kevin Munro does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

Ewing Professor of Audiology Kevin Munro wrote *Earwax removal no longer available at GP surgeries – leaving many struggling to hear*.

It was read 78,000 times across UK, Australia and US and republished by Medical Xpress.

Following publication he acted as scientific advisor for a Which? article on the subject, and Sir Graham Brady MP asked for the NHS website on ear wax management to be updated.

Examples from Manchester authors

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

COVID-19 Arts + Culture Business + Economy Cities Education Environment Health Politics + Society Science + Technology Podcasts Insights

The world needs pharmaceuticals from China and India to beat coronavirus

Published: May 25, 2020 8:00am BST

Shutterstock/FabioBerti

Email 100
Twitter 623
Facebook
LinkedIn
Print

The biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world, known as “big pharma”, are American and European. The top five are Pfizer (US), Roche, Novartis (both Swiss), Merck (US) and GlaxoSmithKline (UK). Yet these companies – and the pharmaceutical industry as a whole – rely on global supply chains. And China and India play key roles in the supply of both ingredients and finished drugs.

Hopes for a vaccine or a medicine that will treat COVID-19 rest on this crucial sector. Yet the globalisation of pharmaceuticals and what some see as an over-reliance on products from China and India has been criticised in the US, the UK and the European Union.

Whether it be hydroxychloroquine (the “miracle” drug Donald Trump has admitted to taking), remdesivir (an antiviral drug used as an emergency treatment for the most acute cases of COVID-19) or a future vaccine, the physical as well as social and economic health of the world depends on pharmaceuticals. Production from China and India will be crucial if the pandemic is to be brought under

Author

 **Rory Horner**
Senior Lecturer, Global Development Institute,
University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

Rory Horner has received funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Regional Studies Association (RSA), British Academy and the National Science Foundation to support his research on India's pharmaceutical industry. He is also a Research Associate at the Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies at the University of Johannesburg.

Partners

 **MANCHESTER**
1824
The University of Manchester

Rory Horner (262,000 reads, 7 articles)

Senior Lecturer in Globalisation and Political Economy

100,000 reads

Read widely across India, the US and Australia

“Writing for The Conversation was a useful learning experience to think about how to communicate ideas from my work beyond academic audiences, one I would recommend to others. My article on why Indian and Chinese pharmaceuticals are needed to fight coronavirus was republished in The Telegraph, and I was subsequently contacted by El Pais (Spain), NPR (US), ARA (Catalonia), Die Welt (Germany) and Fortune (US).”


Through writing for The Conversation I was able, in a time of global crisis, to put out a message quickly (compared to any academic output) and to a wide audience.”

Examples from Manchester authors

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Q Search analysis, research, academics...

COVID-19 Arts + Culture Business + Economy Cities Education Environment Health Politics + Society **Science + Technology** Podcasts Insights



CERN: Study sheds light on one of physics' biggest mysteries – why there's more matter than antimatter

Published: March 21, 2019 9:48am GMT


Email 41
Twitter 290
Facebook
LinkedIn
Print

Why do we exist? This is arguably the most profound question there is and one that may seem completely outside the scope of particle physics. But [our new experiment](#) at CERN's Large Hadron Collider has taken us a step closer to figuring it out.

To understand why, let's go back in time some 13.8 billion years to the Big Bang. This event produced equal amounts of the matter you are made of and something called [antimatter](#). It is believed that every particle has an antimatter companion that is virtually identical to itself, but with the opposite charge. When a particle and its antiparticle meet, they annihilate each other – disappearing in a burst of light.

Why the universe we see today is made entirely out of matter is one of the greatest mysteries of modern physics. Had there ever been an equal amount of antimatter, everything in the universe would have been annihilated. Our research


Author

**Marco Gersabeck**
Lecturer in Physics, University of Manchester

Disclosure statement

Marco Gersabeck receives funding from the UK Research and Innovation Science and Technology Facilities Council. He works for the University of Manchester.

Partners


The University of Manchester

University of Manchester provides funding as a member of The Conversation UK.

Marco Gersabeck (143,000 reads, 1 article)
Lecturer in Physics

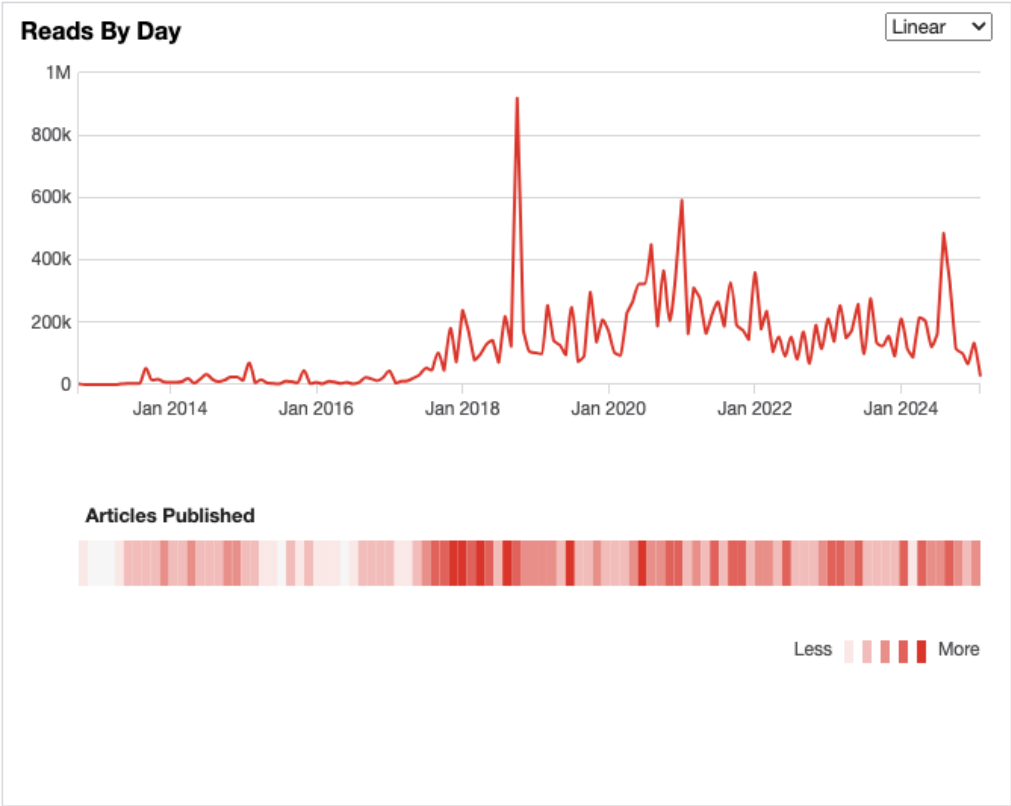
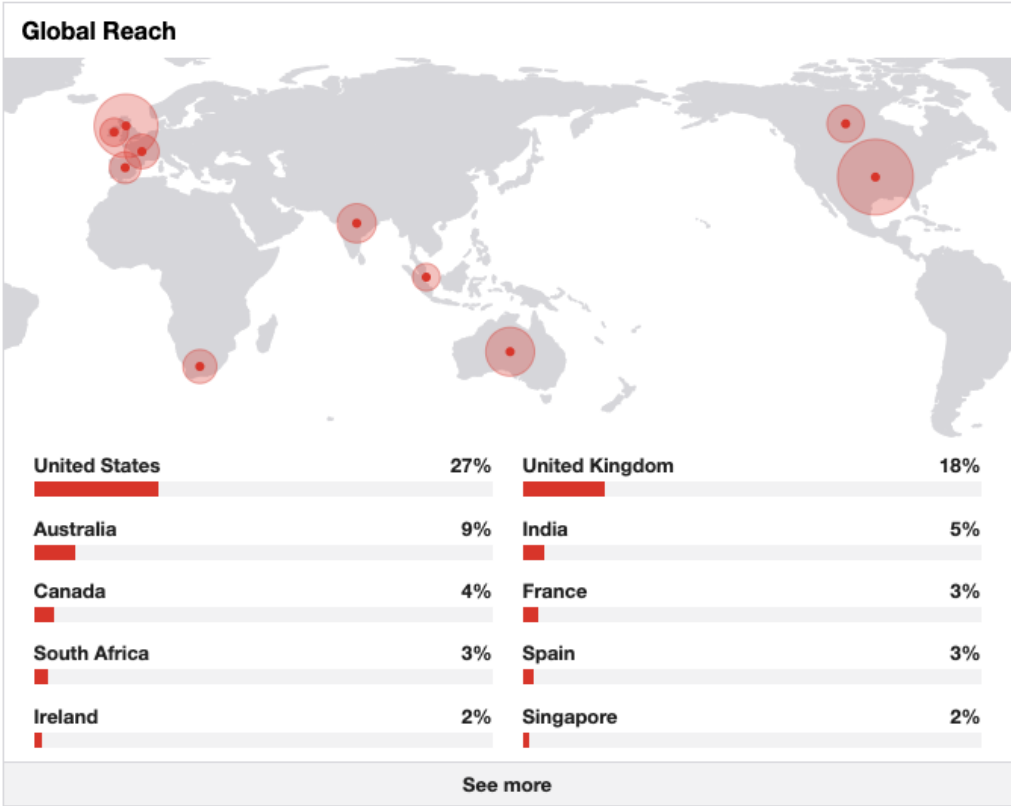
143,000 reads

Republished in Scientific American,
Newsweek, Cosmos magazine

Type to filter results		Authors	Published	Reads	Comments	Engagements [?]
1	Alzheimer's disease: mounting evidence that herpes virus is a cause	Ruth Itzhaki	October 19, 2018	547,795	230	1
2	'Is it safe to have more than one type of COVID vaccine?' and other questions answered by an immunologist	Tracy Hussell	December 7, 2020	321,847	21	0
3	Parents, don't panic if your child hears voices, it's actually quite common	Sarah Parry, Filippo Varese	June 14, 2017	310,204	13	0
4	Jeff Bezos is looking to defy death – this is what we know about the science of ageing	Daniel M Davis	January 21, 2022	308,246	19	0
5	COVID-19 immunity: how long does it last?	Sheena Cruickshank	January 11, 2021	303,150	15	0
6	Inflammation: the key factor that explains vulnerability to severe COVID	Sheena Cruickshank	August 21, 2020	283,186	17	0
7	Alzhéimer: cada vez más evidencias apuntan al virus del herpes como posible causa	Ruth Itzhaki	October 22, 2018	274,791	7	0
8	COVID vaccines: combining AstraZeneca and Pfizer may boost immunity – new study	Tracy Hussell	July 1, 2021	240,722	14	0
9	Four experts investigate how the 5G coronavirus conspiracy theory began	Wasim Ahmed, Joseph Downing, Marc Tuters, Peter Knight	June 11, 2020	223,864	15	0
10	India was a tree planting laboratory for 200 years – here are the results	Dhanapal Govindarajulu	August 10, 2023	221,969	10	0
11	How moon landing conspiracy theories began and why they persist today	Peter Knight	July 10, 2019	221,771	32	0
12	Why rap should share a stage with poetry and jazz	Josephine Metcalf, Will Turner	November 23, 2015	188,643	2	0
13	Betelgeuse: star is continuing to behave mysteriously – here's what would happen if it exploded	Albert Zijlstra	June 12, 2023	185,876	4	0
14	People in their eighties have sex – get over it	David Lee	February 2, 2015	178,916	5	0
15	Reinfección de coronavirus: qué sabemos hasta ahora	Sheena Cruickshank	October 21, 2020	174,390	1	0

- Summary
- Articles
- Authors
- Publishers
- Global
- Compare

2 October 2012 – 12 February 2025 📅



2 October 2012 - 12 February 2025



READER LOCATION

United States	4,602,322
United Kingdom	3,024,898
Australia	1,527,301
India	828,685
Canada	717,851
France	570,858
South Africa	536,980
Spain	428,849
Ireland	296,232
Singapore	269,938
Philippines	240,470
Germany	221,411