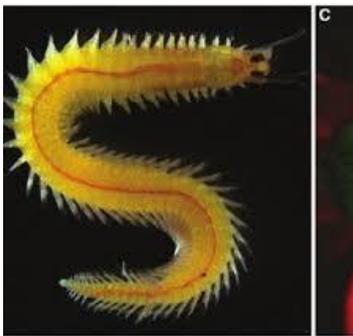




EARA News Digest – Week 45

Welcome to your Monday morning update, [from EARA](#), on the latest developments in science, policy and openness in animal research in Europe and around the world.

Research



Ragworm could hold key to brain disorders

Neuroscientists hope that by studying the [smallest known](#) animal brain - that of the marine ragworm - they can better understand diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's.

[The tiny brain](#), of *Platynereis dumerilii*, despite being only the width of a human hair, has neurons very similar to those of humans.

Studies could help to appreciate chemosensation, the physiological response of a sense organ to chemical stimulus, since the ragworm's brain contains a chemosensory organ.

Dr [Detlev Arendt](#), of the [European Molecular Biology Laboratory](#), Germany, which conducted the study, said they had looked at six-day old worms: 'This is certainly one of the smallest fully formed brains in the animal kingdom one can look at.'

Research

Paralysed can walk again after spinal cord stimulation

Building on a technique developed in [rats](#), Swiss researchers have [announced](#) that stimulating a person's spinal cord can restore voluntary movement in some paralysed patients.

Stimulating neurons in the spinal cord with electric jolts, known as epidural electrical stimulation, amplifies signals coming from the lower extremities.

[Previously](#), (EES) of the spinal cord restored locomotion in animal models of spinal cord injury but was less effective in [humans](#).

The accomplishment was a technological challenge', says [Grégoire Courtine](#), a neuroengineer at the [Swiss Federal Institute of Technology](#) in Lausanne and a co-author of the new study.

Previously the EARA Digest had reported another [breakthrough](#) in the treatment of spinal injuries using gene therapy.



Media

Dog studies reveal insights in cancer treatment and detecting illness

Articles published in the journal [Breast Cancer Research and Treatment](#) suggest that treatments for breast cancer in dogs [could also work](#) in humans.

Dogs can provide useful case studies for "new therapeutic strategies for this particular subtype of breast cancer," said [Jerome Abadie](#) of the Nantes-Atlantic College of Veterinary Medicine, Food Science, and Engineering..



More recently, it has been [reported](#) that sniffer dogs can detect malaria from smelling socks. [Scientists believe](#) it could pave the way for the first rapid and non-invasive test, either using dogs or a handheld device, to screen travellers at border crossings.

Principal investigator, Professor [Steve Lindsay](#), of the Department of Biosciences at Durham University, said: "In principle we have shown that dogs could be trained to detect malaria infected people by their odour with a credible degree of accuracy."

Elsewhere scientists are [working on ways](#) to detect illness in humans by using canine sensory instincts, such as Quebec-based CancerDogs, which since 2011 has been using beagles to identify cancer in breath samples of U.S. firefighters.

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