News in brief

CARBON STORAGE IS JUST PART OF HOW FORESTS COOL THE PLANET

Tropical forests have a crucial role in cooling Earth's surface by extracting carbon dioxide from the air. But only two-thirds of their cooling power comes from this ability, according to a study. The other one-third comes from their ability to create clouds, humidify the air and release cooling chemicals.

This is a larger contribution than expected for these 'biophysical effects' says Bronson Griscom, a forest climate scientist at the non-profit environmental organization Conservation International, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

The analysis (D. Lawrence *et al. Front. For. Glob. Change* https://doi.org/hpqt; 2022) could enable scientists to improve their climate models, while helping governments to devise better conservation and climate strategies.

A team including Deborah Lawrence, an environmental scientist at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, compared how the effects of forests around the world feed into the climate system, breaking down their contributions in bands of ten degrees of latitude. Tropical forests, they found, can cool Earth by a whole 1 °C – and biophysical effects contribute significantly.

PAIRING COVID WITH A VACCINE LEADS TO LONG-LASTING IMMUNITY

Even people who have had COVID-19 receive long-lasting benefits from a full course of vaccination, according to three studies. The data were collected before the Omicron variant emerged, casting some doubt on their relevance today. But if the findings hold up, they could inform vaccine passports, which some countries require for entry to places such as restaurants.

One study examined data from people in Brazil who had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 before vaccination (T. Cerqueira-Silva *et al. Lancet Inf. Dis.* https://doi.org/hpqm; 2022). Participants who had received one dose of vaccine avoided as many as 45% of COVID-19 cases that would have been expected without vaccination. A study in Sweden also found that vaccination increased protection on top of that provided by infection (P. Nordström *et al. Lancet Inf. Dis.* https://doi.org/hpqn; 2022).

The third study, of UK health workers, confirmed the benefits of the 'hybrid' immunity conferred by infection plus vaccination (V. Hall *et al. N. Engl. J. Med.* **386**, 1207–1220; 2022). The authors also showed that those who had been infected with the coronavirus and then received two doses of vaccine had nearly 100% protection from symptomatic COVID-19 for at least six to eight months.

Funny paper titles might lead to more citations

Including a joke in the title of a scholarly paper could pay off in terms of citations, according to a study. The finding – which was posted as a preprint and has not been peer reviewed – suggests that researchers could gain citations by giving their papers funnier titles (S. B. Heard *et al.* https://doi.org/hpsf; 2022).

Researchers looked at 2,439 papers published in 2000 and 2001 in 9 ecology and evolution journals, scoring how humorous their titles were on a 7-point scale. They then looked for a link between papers' humour scores and the number of citations they had received.

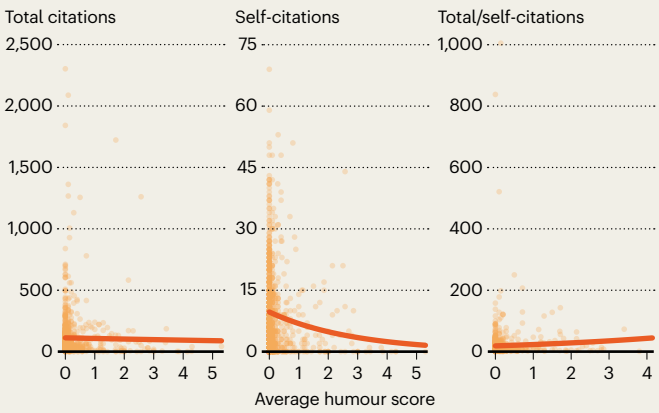
Papers with funny titles were cited slightly less often than their more serious counterparts. However, papers with more amusing titles also tended to have fewer self-citations from their own authors, which led the team to speculate that scientists might give funnier titles to less important papers.

After controlling for self-citations as a measure of a paper's importance, the team found that articles with funny titles are in fact cited more than those with serious titles (see 'Amusing articles').

Some researchers question the study's conclusions, pointing out that self-citations might not be a good proxy for a paper's importance.

AMUSING ARTICLES

When papers' importance (indicated by self-citations) is controlled for, those with funnier titles are cited more often.



2,439 papers published during 2000 and 2001 in 9 ecology and evolution journals.

L TO R: THOMAS MARENT/MINDEN PICTURES; ANDRES BORGES/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; SOURCE: S. B. HEARD *ET AL.* PREPRINT AT BIORXIV HTTPS://DOI.ORG/HPSF (2022)