

# Weekly Progress Roundup

NASA downgrades asteroid threat level, fewer people are drowning, AI models promise to accelerate scientific discovery, and more.

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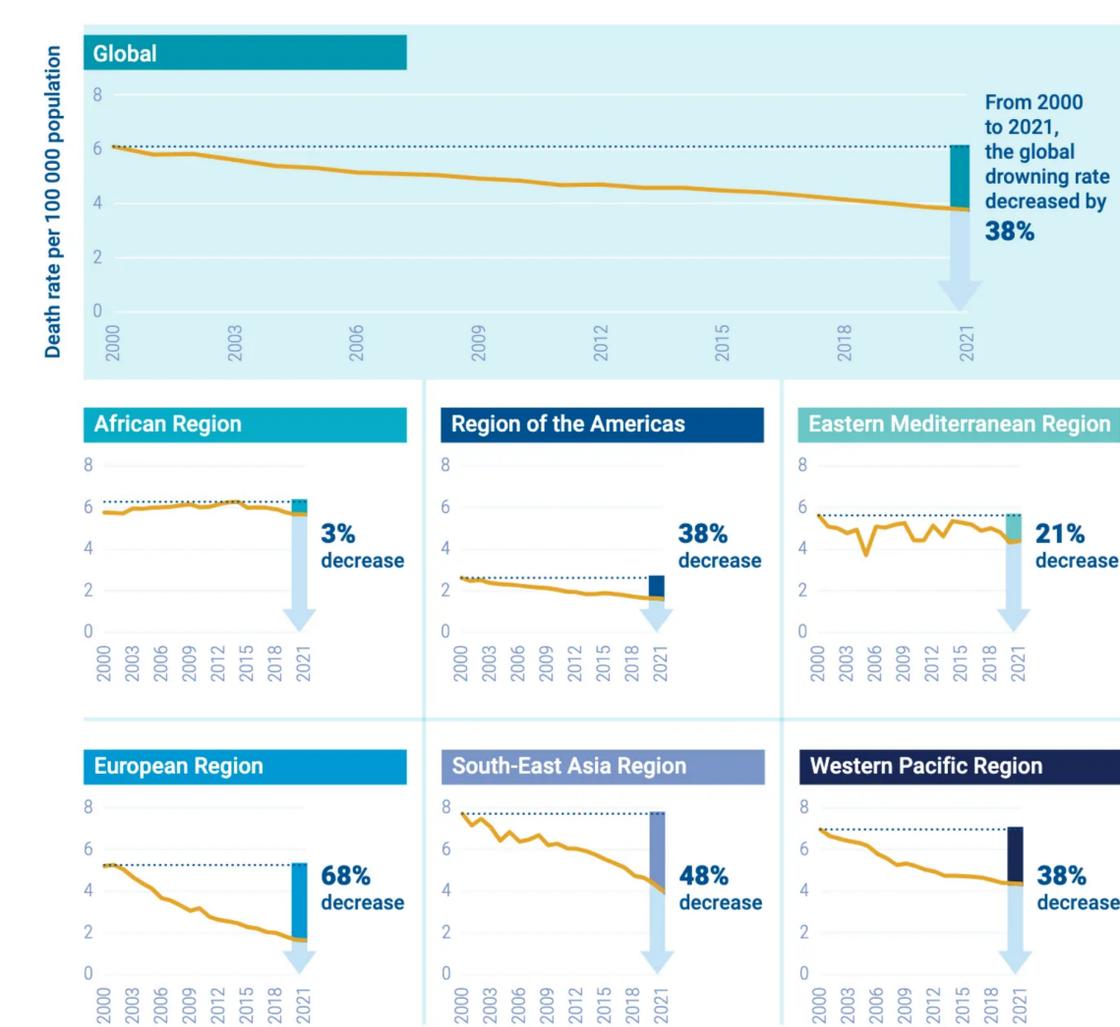
## NASA downgrades YR4 asteroid threat level

On Tuesday, NASA calculated that the widely-publicized asteroid 2024 YR4 had a 3.1 percent chance of hitting earth. On Friday, NASA [revised that prediction](#) downward to 0.28 percent. This rapid correction is common in astronomy: newly discovered asteroids have highly uncertain trajectories, and predictions can change quickly as scientists collect more data.

While there's little reason to freak out about this particular space rock, with a long enough time horizon an Earthbound asteroid strike is inevitable. It would be [wise to prepare](#).

## Fewer people are drowning around the world

Late last year, the World Health Organization published its [first-ever report](#) on drowning. The headline finding is wonderful: since 2000, the global drowning death rate has fallen by 38 percent. Importantly, the rate has declined in every region of the world, though progress in has been relatively slow in Africa.



That is especially good news for children: while drowning is nowhere near to being a leading cause of death for the general population, it is in the top five causes of death for those younger than 14.

## New AI models promise to accelerate scientific discovery

Wednesday marked the launch of two notable AI models that promise to accelerate scientific discovery.

The first, Google's "Co-scientist," is [intended](#) to assist scientists by mirroring "the reasoning process underpinning the scientific method" to generate likely and novel hypotheses. In [one test](#), a team from Imperial College London gave the model a prompt about an antibiotic resistance problem they'd been working on for a decade. Within 48 hours, the AI had not only replicated their leading hypothesis but also provided four plausible alternatives, one of which was completely original.

The second, called [Evo 2](#), was designed by the Arc Institute to read, interpret, and even design entire genomes. This is a big step up from previous biology-focused AIs, which were limited to individual proteins or smaller genetic segments. In tests, the model accurately predicted whether certain genetic mutations would cause cancer—a feat that can take human researchers months.

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