

Science sceptics

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From Michael Duff, Abdus Salam Professor of Theoretical Physics, Imperial College London
I enjoyed Milena Wazeck's analysis of the thought processes of those who denied Einstein's relativity (13 November, p 48). Yet it all sounded eerily familiar.

Phrases such as "when people don't like what science tells them, they resort to conspiracy theories, mud-slinging and plausible pseudoscience" and "the increasingly mathematical approach of theoretical physics collided with the then widely held view that science is essentially simple mechanics, comprehensible to every educated layperson" call to mind the modern-day ramshackle alliance between unqualified scientists, the blogosphere and many science journalists when confronted with the academic consensus of superstrings and M-theory as the most promising candidates for unifying gravity with the other forces of nature. These people are quick to cry "this is not science", while themselves resorting to pseudoscientific alternatives.