

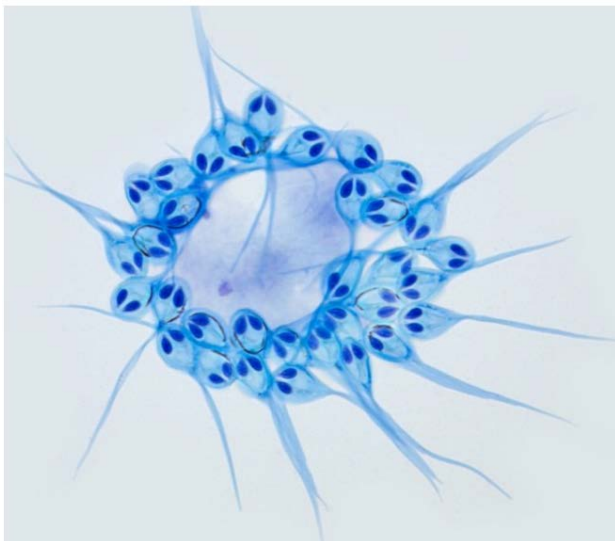
# Scientists Find The First-Ever Animal That Doesn't Need Oxygen to Survive

MICHELLE STARR 25 FEB 2020

Some truths about the Universe and our experience in it seem immutable. The sky is up. Gravity sucks. Nothing can travel faster than light. Multicellular life needs oxygen to live. Except we might need to rethink that last one.

Scientists have just discovered that a jellyfish-like parasite doesn't have a mitochondrial genome - the first multicellular organism known to have this absence. That means it doesn't breathe; in fact, it lives its life completely free of oxygen dependency.

This discovery isn't just changing our understanding of how life can work here on Earth - it could also have implications for the search for extraterrestrial life.



(Stephen Douglas Atkinson)

The parasite, *Henneguya salminicola*, related to corals and jellyfish, lives in cysts in the flesh of salmon and can survive without the need for oxygen. Scientists don't understand how it survives, but it could be using key chemicals from the fish itself.