# UK near bottom in flourishing index amid breakthroughs in snakebite antivenom and ancient scroll deciphering



# Surviving 200 Snake Bites and Deciphering Ancient Scrolls: A Week in Science

In a recent episode, science correspondent Hannah Devlin explored three remarkable stories at the intersection of human resilience and scientific discovery. One particularly striking topic was a global study highlighting the UK’s disturbing position near the bottom of a flourishing index, a stark reminder of the societal challenges faced by its citizens. Among the ranked countries, the UK now finds itself in the third-from-bottom slot, raising questions about mental health and overall wellbeing in a nation grappling with economic turmoil and social discontent.

Transitioning from societal discourse to individual tenacity, Devlin introduced an extraordinary individual who has willingly subjected himself to over 200 snake bites. This man's perilous undertaking is part of a larger ambition to create a universal antivenom. With snake bites a leading cause of mortality in many parts of the world, the significance of finding a broad-spectrum antivenom cannot be overstated. This quest not only displays human bravery but also underscores the desperation and urgency surrounding advancements in medical science, especially in regions where snake bite incidents remain alarmingly high.

The episode also ventured into the annals of history, focusing on a significant breakthrough related to the Herculaneum scrolls—ancient texts preserved beneath the ashes of the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. Recent advancements in imaging technologies have allowed researchers to begin deciphering these charred manuscripts, previously considered lost. The scrolls, which are believed to contain philosophical works, could offer invaluable insights into ancient thought and culture. As researchers inch closer to unveiling their secrets, the implications for historical scholarship are profound, potentially reshaping our understanding of ancient narratives.

These interconnected stories reveal a tapestry of human experience, threading together the struggles for individual safety, societal wellbeing, and the pursuit of historical knowledge. While the UK grapples with its societal metrics, individuals continue to defy odds, revealing an enduring spirit of curiosity and resilience. As scientific capabilities advance, they not only offer hope for improved health outcomes but also illuminate the forgotten chapters of human history, reminding us of the complexities of both our present and our past.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - In this podcast, The Guardian's science correspondent Hannah Devlin discusses three intriguing science stories: a global study ranking the UK third from bottom in human flourishing, a man who intentionally suffered over 200 snake bites in pursuit of a universal antivenom, and a breakthrough in understanding the charred Herculaneum scrolls buried by Mount Vesuvius.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - The podcast features discussions on a global study placing the UK near the bottom in human flourishing, a man's quest involving over 200 snake bites for a universal antivenom, and advancements in decoding the Herculaneum scrolls destroyed by Mount Vesuvius.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - This episode covers a global study ranking the UK low in human flourishing, a man's intentional exposure to over 200 snake bites for universal antivenom research, and progress in understanding the Herculaneum scrolls buried by Mount Vesuvius.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - The podcast discusses a global study placing the UK third from bottom in human flourishing, a man's quest involving over 200 snake bites for a universal antivenom, and breakthroughs in decoding the Herculaneum scrolls destroyed by Mount Vesuvius.
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7. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2025/may/08/surviving-200-snake-bites-decoding-ancient-scrolls-and-the-countries-flourishing-podcast> - The podcast features discussions on a global study placing the UK near the bottom in human flourishing, a man's quest involving over 200 snake bites for a universal antivenom, and advancements in decoding the Herculaneum scrolls destroyed by Mount Vesuvius.