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**BREAKTHROUGH of the YEAR**

1392 **Shots of hope** Desperately needed vaccines against COVID-19, developed and tested at record speed, are 2020’s breakthrough  By J. Cohen

1395 **A divisive disease** As scientists struggled to understand and quell COVID-19, a second pandemic of misinformation and political mayhem raged  By K. Kupferschmidt

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**ON THE COVER**

As the COVID-19 pandemic exploded in 2020, scientists mobilized to develop and test dozens of candidate vaccines targeting the new coronavirus. Many aim to stimulate antibodies against the virus’ protruding spike proteins, which enable it to infect human cells. In record time, several vaccines showed strong evidence of efficacy, giving a beleaguered world new hope. See page 1392. Illustration: Adam Simpson/Heart Agency

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