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CENTER FOR GENETICS AND SOCIETY

BIOPOLITICAL
VIEWS & NEWS

January 14, 2016

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

[CGS Selected to Host a Public Fellow by the American Council of Learned Societies](#)

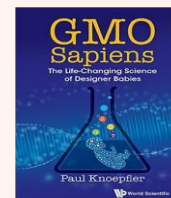
by Center for Genetics and Society

Applications for CGS Project Director on Race, Genetics, and Society can be made through the ACLS Public Fellows Program.



[Talking Biopolitics with Paul Knoepfler and Nathaniel Comfort](#)

[Join us](#) on January 26 for an online conversation about Paul Knoepfler's new book, *GMO Sapiens: The Life-Changing Science of Designer Babies*.



CGS COMMENTARY

[The Third Rail of the CRISPR Moonshot: Minding the Germline](#)

by Elliot Hosman

Millions of dollars are flowing to biotech companies developing gene-editing therapies. Fortunately, most are publicly denouncing germline applications.



[False Inevitabilities and Irrational Exuberance](#)

by Gina Maranto, *Biopolitical Times* guest contributor

In the aftermath on December's gene editing summit, disquieting themes have emerged in some mainstream media and science blogs.



[Why Is Editas Going Public?](#)

by Pete Shanks

Editas, the gene-editing company founded by several of the scientists who developed CRISPR technology, announced on January 4th that it had filed preliminary paperwork for a public offering of stock.



[Coming Up at CGS in 2016](#)

by Jonathan Chernoguz

A roundup of biopolitical resources, recent and upcoming biopolitical events, and a job opening at the Center for Genetics and Society.



CGS in the NEWS

[First GMO Corn, then Frankenfish, and Now — Get Ready for](#)

▶ [Designer Babies](#)

[Cites CGS' Marcy Darnovsky]

by Janet Phelan, *Activist Post*

"The medical arguments are tenuous and the possible social consequences are grave" for modifying the human germline.

[Screening sperm donors for autism? As an autistic person, I know that's the road to eugenics](#)

[Cites CGS]

by Ari Ne'eman, *The Guardian*

The London Sperm Bank and other clinics are using technology and making decisions to remove certain people from future generations.

NEWS

[Are we one step closer to designer babies? Genetically-modified embryos could be made in British labs 'within months' if approved tomorrow](#)

by Fiona Macrae, *The Daily Mail [UK]*

A researcher has asked for permission to study how manipulating an embryo's genes would affect the first week of its development.

▶ [Who is Smart Enough to Decide how to Improve the Human Species?](#)

by Joel Achenbach, *The Washington Post*

Genetic engineering and molecular biology benefit from the digital revolution. This convergence is arguably one of the biggest stories in the world right now.

▶ [King for a Day? On What's Wrong With Changing the World for the Better](#)

by Roland Nadler, *Law and Biosciences Blog*

"It's not so much about ethics (as we usually envision it) as about political philosophy. I'd exhort us to be quicker to ask: who died and made you king?"

▶ [Bay Area biologist's gene-editing kit lets do-it-yourselfers play God at the kitchen table](#)

by Lisa M. Krieger, *Contra Costa Times*

"I want to democratize science," says Josiah Zaynor, who builds inexpensive CRISPR kits to encourage non-scientists to learn genome editing skills.

▶ [CRISPR helps heal mice with muscular dystrophy](#)

by Jocelyn Kaiser, *Science/AAAS*

Three research groups report using CRISPR in mice to modify a gene associated with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the first time CRISPR has been delivered throughout the body to treat grown animals with a genetic disease.

▶ [The Gene-Editing Tool on Every Drugmaker's Wish List This Year](#)

by Caroline Chen and Doni Bloomfield, *Bloomberg*

Complicating the race to apply CRISPR is a heated fight over who invented the approach and owns the right to use it, and how the industry will be regulated.

▶ [Historic CRISPR Patent Fight Primed To Become Head-To-Head Battle](#)

by Alex Lash, *Xconomy*

A USPTO patent examiner recommends kicking Jennifer Doudna's application upstairs. The case will be decided under the old "first to invent" standard.

▶ [A startup that wants to start using a controversial gene-editing tool in people by 2017 just filed to go public](#)

by Lydia Ramsey, *Business Insider*

Editas Medicine, co-founded by Feng Zhang, is developing a CRISPR gene therapy for rare blindness with human trials planned for 2017.

▶ ['We Won't Make Frankensteins,' Cloning Giant Boyalife's CEO Says](#)

by David Lom and Eric Baculinao, *NBC News*

The head of a Chinese firm that is building the world's biggest animal cloning factory has vowed not to use the technology on people — for now, at least.

▶ [Top Court Backs Sacking of Stem Cell Scientist Hwang](#)

by Yoon Min-sik, *The Korea Herald*

The Supreme Court ruled that Seoul National University's dismissal of Hwang Woo-suk, who fabricated his cloning research, was justifiable.

▶ [I Considered Cloning Myself -- But I'm Having Second Thoughts](#)

by Stephen Moss, *The Guardian*

A British couple have paid \$100,000 to clone their dog. But however tempting the process might be for a human egoist, it would destroy the point of life: that it ends.

▶ [Dodgy Stem Cell Treatments, Questionable Practices Under](#)

Investigation

by Janene Pieters, *NL Times [Netherlands]*

Chronically ill patients in the Netherlands are being lured into stem cell treatments for which there is no scientific proof.

▶ [When California Sterilized 20,000 of Its Citizens](#)

by Alexandra Minna Stern, *Zocalo Public Square*

The Golden State was the most aggressive in the country in deeming the "feebleminded" and "deviant" unfit to reproduce.

▶ [Belgium's Top Ad Execs Are Donating Sperm and Eggs to Ensure the Nation's Creative Future](#)

by Angela Natividad, *Adweek*

The "vaguely eugenicist" campaign, called "Ad Babies," asks creative professionals to donate sperm and eggs.

▶ [California's Proposed Budget Upholds 'Racist, Sexist, Classist' Policy](#)

by Tina Vasquez, *RH Reality Check*

The Maximum Family Grant is designed to discourage low-income mothers from having children.

▶ [Jordan Middle School, other schools now up for renaming](#)

by Elena Kadvany, *Palo Alto Weekly*

Middle school students and their parents are objecting to their school being named for Stanford University founding president David Starr Jordan, because of his involvement in the eugenics movement.

▶ [Whiteness and "Making a Murderer": Manitowoc, the "One-Branch Family Tree" and the Sinister Race Science of "Degenerate Whites"](#)

by Kate Tuttle, *Salon*

The Avery clan's reputation as "trouble" echoes myths planted by inane, racist eugenicists in the early 1900s.

▶ [Beer vs. Eugenics: The Good And The Bad Uses Of Statistics](#)

by Jerry Bowyer, *Forbes*

Economists and other mathematical statisticians have an ethical obligation to reject the notion that research methods are ethically neutral.

▶ ['Spermbots' Could Help Women Trying to Conceive \(includes video\)](#)

Phys.org

In an attempt to improve fertility, scientists have developed motorized "spermbots" that can deliver poor swimmers—that are otherwise healthy—to an egg.

▶ [I fathered 800 children, claims sperm donor](#)

by Natalie Morton & Sarah Bell, *BBC News*

An unlicensed UK sperm donor has been connecting with intended parents online for 16 years, donating once a week and charging \$50 a pop.

▶ [Why Is Sperm So Damn Expensive?](#)

by Brittany Malooly, *VICE Broadly*

On the sperm market, the amount of labor that's involved in obtaining so-called premium gametes drives sperm prices sky high.

▶ [The First Artificial Insemination Was an Ethical Nightmare](#)

by Elizabeth Yuko, *The Atlantic*

The 19th-century procedure involved lies, a secrecy pledge, and sperm from a surprise donor.

▶ [Surrogate Sues Father Over Triplets](#)

by Brandy Zadrozny, *The Daily Beast*

In response to an intended parent's request to abort one of three fetuses, a pregnant plaintiff says she will carry them all to term and is suing to keep at least one of the babies.

▶ [The billion dollar babies](#)

by Vandy Muong & Will Jackson, *The Phnom Penh Post [Cambodia]*

Now banned in India, Nepal and Thailand, the surrogacy industry is moving into Cambodia, but potential parents are being warned to stay away.

▶ [Shifting Surrogacy Laws Give Birth to Uncertainty](#)

by Brad Bertrand, *Nikkei Asian Review [Singapore]*

Since the government clampdowns in Thailand, India and Nepal, the focus in Asia has shifted to Malaysia and Cambodia, which lack comprehensive legal frameworks to regulate surrogacy.

▶ [Crackdown on Surrogacy 'to Continue' Even as Ban Idea Dropped](#)

by Liu Jiaying (trans. Li Rongde), *Caixin Online [China]*

Lawmakers in China believe further consultation on the complex issue is needed, but surrogacy is still effectively banned.

▶ [The Chances Of Success For IVF Improve The More Times You Do It, Study Finds, But It Also Highlights The Gap In Accessibility](#)

by Erin McKelle Fischer, *Bustle*

Multiple rounds of IVF require tens of thousands of dollars and months to years of treatment; success is often only for the privileged.

▶ [Women can 'grow' their own IVF embryos with in-body incubator](#)

by Andy Coghlan, *New Scientist*

In a US clinical trial, embryos in an incubation device were placed into women's bodies for five days before removal to select the "fittest" embryo to implant for pregnancy.

▶ [China Embraces Precision Medicine on a Massive Scale](#)

by David Cyranoski, *Nature News*

The country's strong genomics record bodes well, but a shortage of doctors could pose a hurdle.

▶ [Take an online DNA test and you could be revealing far more than you realise](#)

by Andelka Phillips, *The Conversation*

Consumers shouldn't rely on the terms of personal genomics companies' contracts to protect their privacy or rights.

▶ [A Single Blood Test For All Cancers? Illumina, Bill Gates And Jeff Bezos Launch Startup To Make It Happen](#)

by Matthew Herper, *Forbes*

The new startup is called GRAIL, because such a test would be a holy grail for cancer doctors. It already has \$100 million in funding.

▶ [Interest in Precision Medicine Grows, But Reimbursements Slow](#)

by Andrew Joseph, *Stat News*

While some insurers are warming up to precision tests for cancer patients, others view them as investigatory expeditions that could find genetic variants not connected to the cancer.

▶ [New 'revolutionary' DNA test a potential game-changer for prosecutors](#)

by Ken Kolker, *WOOD*

A defense attorney expresses concern as Michigan courts and police import a new computer program that claims to analyze previously unusable mixed DNA evidence.

▶ [Synthetic Biology's Defense Dollars: Signals and Perceptions](#)

by Dr. Filippa Lentzos, *PLOS Blogs*

DARPA aims to develop radically new, game-changing technologies for national security and to create technological surprises for its enemies.

▶ [Hemophilia Patient or Drug Seller? Dual Role Creates Ethical Quandary](#)

by Andrew Pollack, *The New York Times*

TDrugs for hemophilia are so lucrative, drugmakers are hiring patients and their relatives to gain an inside track and access in selling their products.

▶ [Human-Animal Chimeras Are Gestating on U.S. Research Farms](#)

by Antonio Regalado, *MIT Technology Review*

A radical new approach to generating human organs is to grow them inside pigs or sheep.

▶ [Whatever Happened to Human Experimentation?](#)

by Carl Elliott, *Hastings Center Report*

The choice to abandon the word "experiment" is emblematic of a larger movement beginning in the 1990s, in which many bioethics scholars moved from being critics of the research enterprise to being its champions.

▶ [Study: Transparency Lacking in Biomedical Literature](#)

by Anna Azvolinsky, *The Scientist*

"There is a growing momentum and appreciation for the importance of open

science and recognition that our scientific enterprise may not be serving the public interest by sequestering data."

▶ [The problem with science journalism: we've forgotten that reality matters most](#)

by Brooke Borel, *The Guardian*

"It's not so much about ethics (as we usually envision it) as it is the reporter's job to maintain skepticism, look beyond hypotheses and data, find conflicts of interest, trace the money, look at power structures, and see who is excluded or marginalized.

▶ [Lab Pays \\$4M to Settle Doctor-Kickback Claims](#)

by Bianca Bruno, *Courthouse News Service*

"Federal investigators found Pathway violated the False Claims Act by offering physicians and medical groups reimbursements of up to \$20 for each saliva kit they submitted for genetic testing.

▶ [Rulemaking Under Way for DNA Testing for Hawaiian Homelands](#)

by Jennifer Sinco Kelleher, *ABC News*

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands has proposed rules that would allow the use of DNA evidence to prove ancestry.

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