



CENTER FOR
GENETICS
AND SOCIETY

BioPolitical

News&Views

June 18, 2020

SPOTLIGHT



“Disastrous” Embryo Editing Results Deliver “Restraining Order” for Heritable Genome Editing

Katie Hasson, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.16.2020
Researchers in the UK find disturbing results for anyone intent on pursuing heritable human genome editing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newsletter Changes

BioPolitical News & Views is shifting to a new, twice-monthly format to keep you more up-to-date on what we’re doing, writing, and reading at the Center for Genetics and Society. Let us know what you think!

COMMENTARY



#FireStephenHsu

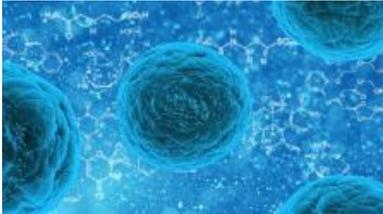
Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.17.2020
A campaign sparked by graduate students at Michigan State University is calling for the noted eugenicist Stephen Hsu to be fired from his administrative role as Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation. His decade-long struggle to identify and commercialize “IQ genes” is finally getting some of the pushback it deserves.



Reckoning (or Not) with Racism and Eugenics in Genetics

Katie Hasson, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.17.2020

DTC genetic testing giants were among the companies that released solidarity statements last week. Glaringly absent was any reflection on the centrality of genetics to scientific racism and eugenics. Fortunately, statements from other academic and clinical genetics organizations did grapple with these legacies.



A Brief Roundup of Stem Cell News

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.17.2020

The stem cell field is in the news with some significant scientific, social, and financial developments



California Must Act Now to Redress Another Form of State Violence

Emily Galpern, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.13.2020

California has an opportunity to right some of the wrongs committed in the name of eugenics. Assembly Bill 3052 would establish the Forced Sterilization Compensation Program to compensate survivors of California's eugenic sterilization laws on the books from 1909 to 1979, and survivors of involuntary sterilizations in women's state prisons after 1979.

WHAT WE'RE READING

HUMAN GENETIC ENGINEERING | EUGENICS | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | ETHICS | SOCIETY | ANIMAL TECHNOLOGIES

HUMAN GENETIC ENGINEERING

Scientists Edited Human Embryos in the Lab, and It Was a Disaster

Emily Mullin, *OneZero* | 06.15.2020

When they analyzed the edited embryos, they found around half contained major unintended edits. The experiment raises important safety concerns for efforts to create gene-edited babies.

Genes May Leave Some People More Vulnerable to Severe Covid-19

Carl Zimmer, *The New York Times* | 06.03.2020

Geneticists have turned up intriguing links between DNA and the disease. Patients with Type A blood, for example, seem to be at greater risk, but the findings suggest that relatively unexplored factors may be playing a large role in who develops life-threatening Covid-19.

EUGENICS

Hundreds of MSU professors, GEU call to remove VP of research Stephen Hsu

Wendy Guzman, *The State News* | 06.15.2020

Hsu has been an outspoken advocate for eugenics. The Michigan State University Graduate Employees Union and many others are calling for MSU to remove him from his post as Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation.

USC removes name of Rufus von KleinSmid, a eugenics leader, from prominent building

Teresa Watanabe and Tomás Mier, *Los Angeles Times* | 06.12.2020

The scholar, who is credited with expanding the university's academic programs and international relations curriculum as president from 1921 to 1947, believed that people with "defects" had no ethical right to parenthood and should be sterilized.

A Selective Amnesia – Sterilizing The History Of Genetics

Robert Resta, *The DNA Exchange* | 06.12.2020

Franz Josef Kallmann, co-founder of the American Society of Human Genetics, was an active supporter of Nazi policies and, like many prominent geneticists, an active proponent of eugenic policies for decades after the war. It's time to stop ignoring it.

For Scientific Institutions, Racial Reconciliation Requires Reparations

C. Brandon Ogbunu, *Scientific American* | 06.12.2020

Antiracism in science must be about much more than challenging the bigoted graybeards of our past such as Ronald A. Fisher, a steward at the First International Eugenics Conference in 1912, whose name was recently removed from a prestigious award.

The gene delusion

Philip Ball, *New Statesmen* | 06.10.2020

"And so they go on, these white men to whom freedom of speech apparently means the freedom to go on asking the same question – might the privileges that they happen to enjoy themselves be a part of the natural order? – and never to take no for an answer."

Understanding our eugenic past to take steps towards scientific accountability

Rori Rohlf, *Genes to Genomes* | 06.08.2020

Can folks like me, who have built careers that grow from eugenics science, hold ourselves accountable for these roots as we continue scientific research? These questions become increasingly important in a political landscape where scientific ideas about genetic variation and difference are weaponized to support devastating policies, and the atrocities of racial injustice are staring us in the face.

Genetics is not why more BAME people die of coronavirus: structural racism is

Winston Morgan, *The Guardian* | 06.04.2020

From the start of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been an attempt to explain the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on different groups through the prism of race. But in reality there is no genetic link between the categories we use to divide people into races and how our immune system responds to viral infections.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

The stranded babies of Kyiv and the women who give birth for money

Oksana Grytsenko, *The Guardian* | 06.15.2020

Lockdown exposed the scale of the commercial surrogacy business in Ukraine, and now women hired as surrogates are speaking out.

Call for Tasmanian central sperm and egg donor register, for donor-conceived children's 'right to know'

Annah Fromberg, *ABC [Australia]* | 06.06.2020

Despite the recommendations of a 2017 parliamentary inquiry, in Tasmania there is no legislation around donor conception and no central register for sperm and egg donors, with fertility clinics instead relying on a set of national guidelines.

ETHICS

Seizing a Pap smear to catch a criminal? Ethical issues of forensic use of medical biobanks

[Nina de Groot](#), *Journal of Medical Ethics Blog* | 06.09.2020

A new paper discusses pressing bioethical concerns related to forensic use of medical biobanks. This practice raises serious problems with respect to confidentiality, trust, autonomy and justice.

SOCIETY

China Is Collecting DNA From Tens of Millions of Men and Boys, Using U.S. Equipment

[Sui-Lee Wee](#), *The New York Times* | 06.17.2020

Even children are pressed into giving blood samples to build a sweeping genetic database that will add to Beijing's growing surveillance capabilities, raising questions about abuse and privacy — and the responsibilities of the U.S. company facilitating this program.

Geneticists weigh in on how 23andMe can tackle racial inequity in the field

[Rebecca Robins](#), *STAT* | 06.10.2020

23andMe says it's 'part of the problem' on racial inequity. STAT asked geneticists what the company and its competitors can do about it.

Biomedical studies are including more female subjects (finally)

[Bethany Brookshire](#), *Science News* | 06.09.2020

In 2019, 49 percent of biomedical research articles had both male and female subjects, almost double the percentage a decade ago.

IBM will no longer offer, develop, or research facial recognition technology

[Jay Peters](#), *The Verge* | 06.08.2020

In a letter to Congress, IBM CEO Arvind Krishna also advocated for police reform, arguing that more police misconduct cases should be put under the purview of federal courts and that Congress should make changes to the qualified immunity doctrine, among other measures.

ANIMAL TECHNOLOGIES

EPA faces suit over plan to release genetically engineered mosquitoes

[Rachel Franzin](#), *The Hill* | 06.15.2020

The Center for Food Safety, the International Center for Technology Assessment and Friends of the Earth allege that the EPA violated the law.

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