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GENETICS  
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# BioPolitical

## News&Views

August 14, 2020

### SPOTLIGHT



#### Video Stories: What Egg Donors Want Intended Parents to Know

In this series of video shorts, six women share their personal stories, with an emphasis on what they wish Intended Parents knew about egg donation.

[View the Series >>>](#)

### COMMENTARY



#### Private Equity Mega-Firm Founded by Trump Buddy Buys World's Largest DNA Database

**Katie Hasson**, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.13.2020

Why is a private equity firm with ties to Donald Trump paying \$4.7 billion for Ancestry, the direct-to-consumer genetic testing company that has more than 18 million people's DNA in its database?



#### About the Video Story Series: What Egg Providers Want Intended Parents to Know

**Emily Galpern**, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.11.2020

Surrogacy360 and We Are Egg Donors partnered on a series of videos to amplify egg providers' perspectives and offer advice on how intended parents can advocate for the health, rights, and



## Book Review: *Why Fish Don't Exist*

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.10.2020

This multifaceted book has at its center the author's experiences tracking the life story of David Starr Jordan, the first president of Stanford University and one of the most significant American proponents of eugenics. Stanford is at present considering renaming Jordan Hall and removing his statue.



## Forum: Risks and rewards of gene editing

**Marcy Darnovsky**, *Issues in Science and Technology* | 07.31.2020

Darnovsky responds to an interview with Jennifer Doudna about heritable genome editing, noting that Doudna both failed to discuss how the ethical issues she mentioned can be addressed and has rejected widespread calls for an enforceable moratorium.

# CGS IN THE NEWS

## Did Nobel laureate Robert Edwards get his gong for enabling eugenics?

**Michael Cook**, *BioEdge* | 8.2.2020

Cites Gina Maranto's *Biopolitical Times* post, which "reminds readers [that Edwards] was a dyed-in-the-wool eugenicist" and quotes her discussion of Osage Obasogie's 2013 *Scientific American* article about Edwards' anticipation of using IVF for determining "the quality of our children."

# WHAT WE'RE READING

HERITABLE HUMAN GENETIC MODIFICATION | GENE THERAPY | EUGENICS | COVID | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | GENOMIC TESTING | PLANT TECHNOLOGIES | STEM CELLS

## HERITABLE HUMAN GENETIC MODIFICATION

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### Engineering future eugenics would be a disaster

**Stuart A. Newman and Tina Stevens**, *Medium* | 08.03.2020

Modifying genes shows promise in curing medical conditions in sick people, but current research suggests that making irreversible genetic changes in people who don't yet exist would be a big mistake.

## GENE THERAPY

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### Why Deaf People Oppose Using Gene Editing to "Cure" Deafness

**Sarah Katz**, *Discover* | 08.11.2020

Researchers have figured out how to use a gene-editing tool called CRISPR 2.0 to prevent and treat

deafness. But many deaf people are happy the way they are.

## **CRISPR Startups Give Genome Editing Several New Twists**

**Catherine Shaffer**, *GEN* | 08.03.2020

Base editors, exonucleases, and other refinements enable advances in pathogen recognition, antibacterial development, genetic medicine, xenotransplantation, and agriculture.

## **Some scientists are taking a DIY coronavirus vaccine, and nobody knows if it's legal or if it works**

**Antonio Regalado**, *MIT Technology Review* | 07.29.2020

Celebrity geneticist George Church and at least 20 other researchers and “science enthusiasts” didn’t want to wait for the results of clinical trials. “I think we are at much bigger risk from covid,” Church said.

## **Gene Therapy Shows Promise For Hemophilia, But Could Be Most Expensive U.S. Drug Ever**

**Rob Stein**, *NPR* | 07.20.2020

BioMarin Pharmaceutical says the treatment could cost as much as \$3 million per patient, which they justify by claiming that it would save a lot of money in the long run.

## **EUGENICS**

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### **A Rift Over Carl Linnaeus Shows We Shouldn't Idolize Scientists**

**Brian Lovett**, *Undark* | 08.06.2020

The traditions we carry into the future, including whom we choose to honor, should be able to withstand modern scrutiny.

### **Racist Incident From Bronx Zoo's Past Draws Apology**

**Julia Jacobs**, *New York Times* | 07.29.2020

The Wildlife Conservation Society apologized for an incident in 1906 when a Central African man was placed on exhibit at the zoo, and for its association with two eugenicists.

### **The secret history of Britain's universities and eugenics**

**Becca Muir**, *Prospect* | 07.28.2020

The home of eugenics has nearly always been in universities, says David King of Human Genetics Alert: “Universities are a protected space for these kind of views.” However, others disagree, suggesting that “today we know far more but are much less confident about how we use that information.”

### **America's 'untouchables': the silent power of the caste system**

**Isabel Wilkerson**, *The Guardian* | 07.28.2020

We cannot fully understand the current upheavals, or almost any turning point in American history, without accounting for the human pyramid that is encrypted into us all: the caste system. Caste and race are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive. Caste is the bones, race the skin.

## **COVID**

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### **How the Pandemic Defeated America**

**Ed Yong**, *The Atlantic* | 08.04.2020

In dealing with the coronavirus epidemic, America has careened between inaction and ineptitude. The breadth and magnitude of its errors are difficult, in the moment, to truly fathom.

### **Irregularities In COVID Reporting Contract Award Process Raises New Questions**

**By Dina Temple-Raston & Tim Mak**, *NPR* | 07.29.2020

There are questions about how TeleTracking Technologies came to be responsible for gathering data

in the midst of a pandemic.

## Artificial Intelligence, Health Disparities, and Covid-19

[Rod McCullom](#), *Undark* | 07.27.2020

How racially biased is AI medicine? Are biased algorithms worsening Covid-19's toll on Black Americans?

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### Up to 1,000 babies born to surrogate mothers stranded in Russia

[Andrew Roth](#), *The Guardian* | 07.29.2020

Border closures related to the pandemic have put additional strain on surrogate mothers, some of whom have been asked to provide care until intended parents can travel to Russia.

### The Fight for Fertility Equality

[David Kaufman](#), *New York Times* | 07.22.2020

A movement has formed around providing increased access to family formation through gestational surrogacy. Proponents argue that one's ability to build a family should not be determined by wealth, sexuality, gender or biology.

## GENOMIC TESTING

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### A Private Equity Firm Bought Ancestry, and Its Trove of DNA, for \$4.7B

[Kevin Truong](#), *Vice* | 08.07.2020

According to the company, "Blackstone will not have access to user data and ... will not be sharing user DNA and family tree records with our portfolio companies." Observers wonder, however, why they are investing in the company, which was recently forced to make layoffs amid slowing growth.

### There's No Such Thing as Family Secrets in the Age of 23andMe

[Caitlin Harrington](#), *Wired* | 07.30.2020

Technology has a way of creating new consequences for old decisions. Today, consumer DNA tests allow donor-conceived people to match with half-siblings, track down their donors, and form advocacy organizations. More and more of them are banding together to demand regulation of a fertility industry they say has long overlooked their concerns.

## PLANT TECHNOLOGIES

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### Why We Oppose Golden Rice

[The Stop Golden Rice Network](#), *Independent Science News* | 08.07.2020

On the 7th annual International Day of Protest Against Golden Rice, a coalition including organizations from many Asian countries details the scientific and political reasons behind their objections to Golden Rice as an unwanted and unnecessary technology.

## STEM CELLS

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### Endorsements: Vote NO on Props 14 and 23

[Editorial](#), *The Bakersfield Californian* | 08.08.2020

"Voters and earlier proposition advocates should be proud of the progress the initial \$3 billion stem cell investment has accomplished. But times have changed and passage of another mega-bond now would be unwise."



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