



CENTER FOR
GENETICS
AND SOCIETY

BioPolitical

News&Views

September 26, 2020

SPOTLIGHT

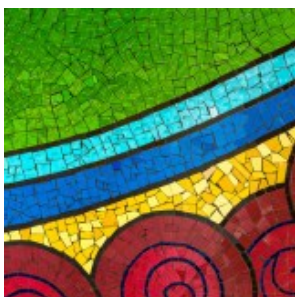


Are we mapping a path to CRISPR babies?

Katie Hasson and Marcy Darnovsky, *The Hill* | 09.13.2020

Amid our multiple ongoing crises, it would be easy to overlook another report on still speculative biotechnology. But this one represents a profoundly consequential step.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Racial Justice and International Surrogacy

Racism affects every aspect of our lives, and international surrogacy is no exception. Read Surrogacy360's new statement, **Racial Justice and International Surrogacy**, to understand historical and contemporary injustices shaping individual family decisions around surrogacy and reproduction. **Surrogacy360**, a project of the Center for Genetics and Society, is an online resource for people grappling with the challenges and complexities of international commercial surrogacy.

COMMENTARY

Another \$5.5 Billion for the California Stem Cell Institute

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.24.2020

CIRM has finally run out of cash. Proposition 14 is on the California ballot to give CIRM another \$5.5 billion plus interest. Unfortunately, the new measure does nothing to ameliorate the flaws of the old one, and in some ways makes things worse.



Climate Crisis, Designer Babies and Pandemics

Center for Genetics and Society, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.24.2020

Check out the recording of this wide-ranging conversation about how we can challenge “the techno-utopianism of the genetically engineered age” with author and activist Bill McKibben, evolutionary biologist Stuart Newman, social theorist Marsha Darling, and moderator Pat Thomas.

CGS IN THE NEWS

California Stem Cell Measure Scrutinized in Virus Budget Crunch

Joyce E. Cutler and Tiffany Stecker, *Bloomberg Government* | 09.17.2020

“The primary question that voters need to ask themselves is, is this the right use of what has become very scarce?” said Marcy Darnovsky, executive director of the Berkeley, California-based Center for Genetics and Society, referring to the state’s deficit.

Should California Put \$5.5 Billion Into Stem Cell Research? Voters To Decide With Prop. 14.

Sammy Caiola, *CapRadio* | 09.18.2020

The Center for Genetics and Society has expressed concerns about the measure. *[Note: The article incorrectly states that CGS has filed an argument against it.]*

WHAT WE’RE READING

HERITABLE HUMAN GENOME EDITING | EUGENICS | SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | STEM CELL RESEARCH

HERITABLE HUMAN GENOME EDITING

The slippery slope of the human gene editing debate

John Evans, *Oxford University Press Blog* | 09.22.2020

What sound like barriers in the debate are not actually limits but speed bumps. It turns out that the somatic/germline distinction was the last clear barrier between the universally accepted somatic gene therapy for disease and the dystopian bottom of the slope.

Why we need a global citizens’ assembly on gene editing

Nicole Curato and Simon Niemeyer, *The Conversation* | 09.17.2020

“We envisage a process that would convene at least 100 people from all over the world, none of whom can claim expertise or a history of advocacy on this issue. After learning about the issue from a national perspective, they would gather for five days to deliberate over whether there should be a set of global principles for the regulation of genome editing technologies.”

Experts Conclude Heritable Human Genome Editing Not Ready for Clinical Applications

[Francis Collins](#), *NIH Director's Blog* | 09.17.2020

"I'm gratified to say that in its new report, the expert panel closely examined the scientific and ethical issues, and concluded that heritable human genome editing is too technologically unreliable and unsafe to risk testing it for any clinical application in humans at the present time."

An Indigenous bioethicist on CRISPR and decolonizing DNA

[Alissa Greenberg](#), *NOVA* | 09.11.2020

An interview with geneticist-bioethicist Krystal Tsosie of Vanderbilt University, who is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, about how Indigenous culture, gene editing, and bioethics converge, and what it might take to #DecolonizeDNA.

EUGENICS

Trump's eugenics obsession: He thinks he has "good German genes," because he's a fascist

[Heather Digby Parton](#), *Salon* | 09.21.2020

Somewhere along the line, all these words of his and all the actions of his administration come together in a pattern in which his belief in eugenics fits right in with a program that looks an awful lot like that "F" word.

The forgotten time Ruth Bader Ginsburg fought against forced sterilization

[Ria Tabacco Mar](#), *Washington Post* | 09.19.2020

The present director of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project remembers her predecessor's legal work against eugenics.

ICE Is the New Face of America's Legacy of Forced Sterilization

[Melissa Gira Grant](#), *The New Republic* | 09.17.2020

CGS Advisory Board Member Dorothy Roberts asks: "What would it mean to give consent to be sterilized in a prison or detention center? ... I think it's a really terrible debate to be part of, even now."

In a horrifying history of forced sterilizations, some fear the US is beginning a new chapter

[Catherine E. Shoichet](#), *CNN* | 09.16.2020

Natalia Molina was shocked when she heard a whistleblower's allegations about hysterectomies in ICE custody. But also, she wasn't. ... "The story gained so much traction immediately with people, because there's such a long history affecting many different racial and ethnic groups, across many institutions -- mental health hospitals, public hospitals, prisons," she says.

SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

Scientists are working on vaccines that spread like a disease. What could possibly go wrong?

[Filippa Lentzos and Guy Reeves](#), *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* | 09.18.2020

Self-spreading vaccine research is a small but growing field. As the field expands, so does the potential for abuse. Our ambition must be to make a collective decision about the technical pathways we are willing, or not willing, to take as a society.

Synthetic biologists have created a slow-growing version of the

coronavirus to give as a vaccine

[Antonio Regalado](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 09.16.2020

Live vaccines defeated smallpox and polio. One company claims a weakened coronavirus could do the same for covid-19.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

“I Have Been a Surrogate 3 Times, This Is What It's Like”

[Eloise Drane](#), *Newsweek* | 09.23.2020

A surrogate describes her three pregnancies for other couples and her experience donating eggs as a Black woman. Despite health complications — she underwent an emergency C-section and developed Bell's Palsy in one pregnancy, and had an emergency hysterectomy the third time — she continues to see surrogacy as “a selfless, amazing, beautiful gift that you can give to somebody else.”

Stranded babies, sobbing parents: Pandemic splits surrogates from families

[Agence France-Presse](#), *Japan Times* | 09.22.2020

China banned all forms of surrogacy — both commercial and altruistic — in 2001, but some couples seek women abroad to carry their babies. The pandemic has tipped the international surrogacy industry into chaos. It has also revived the black market for surrogacy inside China.

One Sperm Donor. 36 Children. A Mess of Lawsuits.

[Sarah Zhang](#), *The Atlantic* | 09.11.2020

An interview with Dov Fox, a professor of health law at the University of San Diego, about a lawsuit filed by mothers who were deceived about their sperm donor's biography. Fox spent the past year interviewing parents who were deceived, children coming to terms with their genetic inheritance, and eventually the donor himself.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

No on Prop. 14; no need to replicate California's disappointing stem cell experiment

[Editorial Board](#), *San Francisco Chronicle* | 09.24.2020

The state shouldn't make a habit of determining science policy and funding by plebiscite.

Why Prop. 14 is unaffordable, unnecessary, fatally flawed and unsupportable

[Jeff Sheehy](#), *San Diego Union-Tribune* | 09.15.2020

If California is going to continue to spend billions to fund stem-cell research, the Legislature should draft a new measure that does it the right way.

Those linked to stem cell board received more than \$2.1 billion

[David Jensen](#), *Capitol Weekly* | 09.15.2020

The vast majority of the \$2.7 billion spent by California's stem cell agency over the last 15 years has gone to enterprises that have ties to members of the agency's governing board. All of which is legal. All of which is not likely to change.

DONATE