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BioPolitical

News&Views

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SPOTLIGHT



The Push to Change the 14-Day Rule

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.10.2021
The 14-day limit on research with *in vitro* human embryos went unquestioned for years – until keeping them alive longer became technically possible.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Trumpism and its Discontents

On Friday, March 12, 12–1 p.m. (Pacific), join the launch event for a new book that examines the political conditions that led to the rise of Donald Trump and the consequences of his presidency for US society and the world. Osagie K. Obasogie, Professor of Bioethics at UC Berkeley and CGS Senior Fellow, will moderate a panel featuring several of the contributors.

[Watch the live webcast here.](#)



Event video now available: “A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics in America”

View the recording of a recent event sponsored by the SF Asian Art Museum, featuring a discussion of the film *A Dangerous Idea* with UC Berkeley bioethicist and CGS Senior Fellow Osagie K. Obasogie, CGS Executive Director Marcy Darnovsky, and filmmaker Stephanie Welch, moderated by Milton Reynolds.

[Watch the video here.](#)



Australia's Parliament Should Maintain the Laws that Prohibit "Mitochondrial Donation"

Katherine Drabiak, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.11.2021

The Australian Health Minister recently announced plans to introduce legislation that would modify the laws currently prohibiting three-person IVF. The public consultation period is drawing to a close.



"Designer Babies: All You Ever Wanted to Know (and More)" Kicks off Webinar Series on Genetics and Justice

Katie Hasson, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.10.2021

Bioethicist Françoise Baylis recently presided over a series of wide-ranging discussions of the social, ethical, and scientific aspects of genetic technologies hosted by the Wayne Morse Center at the University of Oregon.

WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | GENE THERAPY | GENOMICS |
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GENOME EDITING

A biographer and a bioethicist take on the CRISPR revolution

Jackie Leach Scully, *Nature* | 03.08.21

Two new books about the story of CRISPR, one by Hank Greely and the other by Walter Isaacson, suggest there are reasons to rethink the relationship between the scientific pursuit of knowledge, capital, nationalistic pride, and the public good.

Decoding the CRISPR-baby stories

J. Benjamin Hurlbut, *MIT Technology Review* | 02.24.2021

Three recent books explore the He Jiankui affair and what gene editing means for the future of humanity: Kevin Davies's *Editing Humanity*, Walter Isaacson's *The Code Breaker*, and Eben Kirksey's *The Mutant Project*. The science-centric storytelling of the first two implies that Science sits outside of society, that it deals primarily with pure arenas of nature and knowledge. But that is a false narrative.

This is the year that CRISPR moves from lab to clinic

Jennifer Doudna, *Wired UK* | 03.08.2021

According to the pioneering CRISPR scientist, "Come 2021, talk of moratoriums [on "CRISPR babies"], which cannot be enforced by scientists or legislators, will be replaced by robust discussion about how to establish appropriate regulations that will not stifle the technology, but allow it to reach its potential to help those with the greatest need."

GENE THERAPY

NHS to use world's most expensive drug to treat spinal muscular atrophy

[Phoebe Weston](#), *The Guardian* | 03.07.21

The world's most expensive drug, which treats babies and young children with spinal muscular atrophy, a rare and often fatal degenerative disorder, will be available this year for the first time through the National Health Service in England. It costs £1.79m – almost \$2.5 million – per dose.

GENOMICS

She Was Imprisoned for Killing Her 4 Children. But Was It Their Genes All Along?

[Damien Cave](#), *New York Times* | 03.08.2021

The case of Kathleen Folbigg has become a contest between cutting-edge science and an Australian court system that sometimes ignores it. New genetic evidence suggests that the children died from natural causes, and scientists are demanding that she be pardoned.

DNA databases are too white, so genetics doesn't help everyone. How do we fix that?

[Tina Hesman Saey](#), *Science News* | 03.04.2021

Instead of a truly human genome that represents everyone, “what we have is essentially a European genome,” says an evolutionary historian. But race isn't the issue. The problem is that collectively, those data add up to a catalog of genetic variants that don't represent the full range of human genetic diversity.

EUGENICS

The New Wave of Anti-Trans Legislation Sure Looks a Lot Like Eugenics

[Evan Urquhart](#), *Slate* | 03.03.2021

State-level bills around women's sports and adolescent medical care would seem to share a common goal. It's not *precisely* eugenics...but it certainly rhymes.

How the Los Angeles Times shilled for the racist eugenics movement

[Alexandra Minna Stern](#), *Los Angeles Times* | 02.28.2021

The *Times* ran a column for more than six years extolling the virtues of a movement of compulsory sterilization to do away with those deemed “defective” or “unfit.”

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

We Should All Be Able to Have Babies Like White People

[Andre M. Perry](#), *The Nation* | 03.09.2021

Instead of restricting women's basic rights or limiting conversations on reproductive justice to abortion, the focus of federal policy should be on creating conditions that enable Black women to expand the ways they choose to make a family.

International Women's Day: China looks at domestic violence, illegal surrogacy, and paternity leave

[Phoebe Zhang](#), *South China Morning Post* | 03.08.2021

Even though China has a medical ban on surrogacy within its borders, it does not ban individuals from travelling abroad to participate in surrogacy. These legal loopholes and market demand have resulted in a commercial surrogacy boom.

America's love of free markets extends to its fertility clinics

The Economist | 03.06.21

Thanks to an absence of regulation, America is a notable exporter of human sperm. Surging demand and an absence of government regulation have created a field that has developed “more like a business than medicine,” says Dov Fox of the University of San Diego, author of *Birth Rights and Wrongs*.

VARIOUS

How to create a more inclusive future post-COVID with disability advocate Alice Wong (video)

Mashable | 03.03.21

Human gene editing is deeply concerning because of the potential to “disappear” people said to have “bad genes.” It sends the message that disabled people don't belong in the future.

The World Must Regulate Tech Before It's Too Late

Vivek Wadhwa, Tarun Wadhwa, *Foreign Policy* | 03.01.2021

It's more urgent than ever that the nations of the world get together to hammer out a shared consensus on a broad range of technologies and their future use. We need our collective ethical governance to keep pace with technology creep.

Was “science” on the ballot?

Stephen Hilgartner, J. Benjamin Hurlbut, and Sheila Jasanoff, *Science* | 02.26.2021

How can we build a more progressive politics of science? Three moves are essential: make science more attentive to citizens' real concerns, make citizens smarter about how science works in governance, and make spaces for deliberating different interpretations of science without polarizing conflicts.

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