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SPOTLIGHT



Looking Ahead to the Third Human Genome Editing Summit

March 9, 2022 6-9 AM PT / 9 AM-12 PM ET

On March 9, CGS Associate Director Katie Hasson will speak at the Royal Society's three-day series "Looking Ahead to the Third Human Genome Editing Summit." Her presentation on the global policy landscape for heritable genome editing will be part of the "Looking Ahead to Governance" panel happening on March 9 from 6-9am PT / 9am-12pm ET / 2-5pm GMT. Watch here or catch up on all of the recorded presentations after the series—no registration needed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mini-conference: Why Your Movement Should Oppose Designer Babies

Stop Designer Babies is hosting an online mini-conference on March 9 at 9 am PT / 12 pm ET / 5 pm GMT. CGS Consultant Pete Shanks will present as part of a panel of feminist, anti-racist, disability rights, working class, and environmental activists discussing opposition to heritable gene editing. Find out more about the conference and register [here](#).

Intelligence Squared Debate: Use Gene Editing to Make Better Babies

CGS Executive Director Marcy Darnovsky and philosopher Françoise Baylis faced off against geneticist George Church and futurist Amy Webb on the question: should we use gene editing to make "better babies?" Voting is open for one more day. View the debate or listen to it as a podcast [here](#).

COMMENTARY



On Purging DNA Databases of Innocents

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 02.24.2022

San Francisco police routinely added rape victims' DNA samples to a crime database, even after they were no longer needed to help identify the rapist. Victims of crimes, as well as people who are suspected of committing crimes but never found guilty, have the right to have their DNA removed.



Crisis in Ukraine creates fears for Canadian parents using Ukrainian surrogates

[Alison Motluk](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 02.24.2022

With tensions rising in Ukraine, the Canadian government advised its citizens to avoid traveling there. But some Canadians—parents awaiting babies being carried by surrogates in that country—continued making plans to head there to retrieve their newborns in the coming weeks and months.



The Remarkable Ambitions of Peter Thiel

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 02.23.2022

Tech billionaire and transhumanist Peter Thiel hopes his financial support for political candidates affiliated with former President Donald Trump will help tip the United States toward a “momentous correction.” Apparently comfortable with jettisoning democracy, Thiel’s varied pursuits reveal his ambitions for freedom from physical death, taxes, and social responsibility.

WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | EUGENICS
GENOMICS | STEM CELLS | VARIOUS

GENOME EDITING

Gene-Edited Brain Organoids Are Unlocking the Secrets of Autism

[Amit Katwala](#), *Wired* | 02.21.2022

By studying genetically modified organoids of the human cerebral cortex, each with a mutation in one of three genes thought to be linked to autism, researchers aim to tease out exactly how differences in DNA might contribute to changes in brain structure and behaviors characteristic of autism.

First gene therapy for Tay-Sachs disease successfully given to two children

[Miguel Sena-Esteves](#), *The Conversation* | 2.14.2022

The gene therapy uses two viral vectors to deliver DNA instructions to brain cells, teaching them how to produce the enzyme that children with Tay-Sachs are missing. Two children have been treated with positive results. More testing is needed to confirm whether the treatment can fully stop disease progression.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Ukraine: Ireland 'speeds up' exit for surrogate babies

BBC | 02.21.2022

As fears of a Russian invasion intensify, the Irish government has expedited travel home from Ukraine for families with newborn surrogate babies.

Black women, long ignored in fertility discussions, speak out

[Shelia Poole](#), *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* | 02.18.2022

Black women are more likely to face infertility issues than white women, but are less likely to seek treatment and have been excluded from research on infertility. Now, Black women facing infertility are raising awareness about available treatments.

EUGENICS

Improving Health Outcomes for Black Women and Girls with Disabilities

[Megan Buckles and Mia Ives-Rublee](#), *Center for American Progress* | 02.15.2022

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated systemic and structural barriers faced by Black disabled women and girls in the health care system that stem from a legacy of slavery, ongoing anti-Black racism, and ableism.

‘There’s no amount of money that can take away how I felt’: California pays reparations to survivors of state-sanctioned sterilizations

[Carolyn Said](#), *San Francisco Chronicle* | 02.11.2022

Dozens of California women were sterilized without their consent while in state prisons, some as recently as 2010. These abuses echo more than 20,000 involuntary sterilizations conducted between 1909 and 1979 on people in state-run institutions, under California's eugenics law. Now the state is offering compensation for survivors of both episodes.

Wrestling with the legacy of eugenics

[Jennifer Rainey Marquez](#), *Georgia State University Research Magazine* | 02.08.2022

“Most people think that eugenics is something from the distant past, but...we’re still wrestling with questions about how we might manipulate heredity and how those impulses might mirror what the eugenics movement was driven by,” said historian Paul Lombardo.

GENOMICS

The ‘Nation’s Psychiatrist’ Takes Stock, With Frustration

[Ellen Barry](#), *The New York Times* | 02.22.2022

The former director of the National Institute of Mental Health notes that while the government has invested billions to better understand the neurobiological and genetic origins of mental illnesses, the outcomes for patients with those illnesses have declined.

This family carried a rare mutation that should have been lethal. What was keeping them alive?

[Eric Boodman](#), *STAT News* | 02.15.2022

The Burns family inherited not just one but two ultra-rare mutations, the second shielding them from the deadly effects of the first. Some researchers see in the discovery a promising approach to treating other disease-causing mutations.

San Francisco police linked a woman to a crime using DNA from her rape exam, D.A. Boudin says

[Megan Cassidy](#), *San Francisco Chronicle* | 02.14.2022

The San Francisco police crime lab has been entering sexual assault victims' DNA profiles in a database used to identify suspects in crimes, an allegation that raises legal and ethical questions regarding the privacy rights of victims.

STEM CELLS

Good News for the Bubble Baby Disease Treatment Backed by Millions from California Taxpayers

David Jensen, *The California Stem Cell Report* | 02.15.2022

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine has provided new funding to resume a clinical trial halted nearly two years ago. UCLA will conduct the trial for a gene therapy to treat “bubble baby disease” and are seeking a commercial partner to make the treatment more widely available.

A Woman Is Cured of H.I.V. Using a Novel Treatment

Apoorva Mandavilli, *The New York Times* | 02.15.2022

The third person ever to be cured of H.I.V. was treated with a new transplant method involving umbilical cord blood, which could open up the possibility of curing more people of diverse racial backgrounds than was previously possible.

VARIOUS

Editorial: Biden doesn't get it

H. Holden Thorp, *Science* | 02.18.2022

Biden's decision to appoint Francis Collins as interim science adviser was a missed opportunity to further equality in the sciences. Alondra Nelson's vision, experience, and expertise presented a clear opportunity to put someone in the combined role who represents the future of American science.

The Moral Danger of Declaring the Pandemic Over Too Soon

Gregg Gonsalves, *The New York Times* | 02.17.2022

While the development of antiretroviral drugs brought the AIDS pandemic to an end for those who could access the drugs and good medical care, HIV continued to take root in marginalized communities in the U.S. and in Africa. Declaring the Covid-19 pandemic over before ensuring equity in access to vaccines and treatments would miss that lesson.

Lifting the California mask mandate basically says chronically ill and disabled lives don't matter

Dipti S. Barot, *San Francisco Chronicle* | 02.16.2022

The decline of the Omicron variant has led many states to remove mask mandates, but this push for normalcy is premature. States should recognize how this will affect those who are chronically ill, disabled, or otherwise medically vulnerable.

If you've read this far, you clearly care about the fight to reclaim human biotechnologies for the common good. Thank you!

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