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## CENTER FOR GENETICS AND SOCIETY

### BIOPOLITICAL VIEWS & NEWS

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### [Not To Be Missed: Online Conversations with Cutting-Edge Thinkers](#)

*Talking Biopolitics* is a series of live web-based conversations with cutting-edge thinkers, writers, and filmmakers about the social meanings of human biotechnologies. Thirteen fascinating discussions are available [here](#).



### [Why Worry About Genetically Modified Babies?](#)

by Marcy Darnovsky and Jessica Cussins, *GeneWatch*

The terms "genetically modified babies" and "designer babies" are attention-getters. But beyond the catchy sound bites, what do they really mean - and are they something we need to worry about?



### [The Vagina Bio-Hack That Wasn't: How Two 'Startup Bros' Twisted the 'Sweet Peach' Mission](#)

by Jessica Cussins, *Huffington Post*

When news broke last week that two male CEOs wanted to make women's vaginas smell like peaches, there was a well-deserved backlash. Now, it turns out the project they announced wasn't even theirs, and they got it all wrong.



### [Pigs to People](#)

by Pete Shanks

Synthetic biology takes aim at xenotransplantation.



### [CRISPR Opportunities ... For What? And For Whom?](#)

by Pete Shanks

Money and deals are flowing into the companies founded on CRISPR technology, which promises to enable the precise editing of genomes.



## [DC Symposium: “The Future of Reproduction”](#)

by Marcy Darnovsky

Speakers at a public event in the nation’s capitol explored current and future high-tech fertility practices.

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## NEWS

### ▶ [Controversial DNA Test Comes to UK](#)

[Quotes CGS's Marcy Darnovsky]

by Michelle Roberts and Paul Rincon, *BBC*

The UK’s Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency says the 23andMe spit test can be used with caution. But critics say it may not be accurate enough to base health decisions on.

### ▶ [When Making Babies Goes High Tech: A Future Tense Event Recap](#)

[Quotes CGS's Marcy Darnovsky]

by Ariel Bogle, *Slate*

From pre-implantation genetic screening to exo-wombs, these changes could even evolve our most basic notions of family and society.

### ▶ [Want Blue Eyes With That Baby?: The Strange New World of Human Reproduction](#)

[Quotes CGS's Marcy Darnovsky]

by Eleanor Clift, *The Daily Beast*

Should a woman’s own 55-year-old mother bear the woman’s triplets? Well, it’s happening. Where should society draw the lines here?

### ▶ [Deceptive Labeling of a Radical Embryo Construction Technique](#)

by Stuart A. Newman, *The Huffington Post*

The British Parliament appears poised to give the go-ahead to a set of techniques for generating infants which, if implemented, would constitute the first cases of large-scale human genetic engineering.

### ▶ [Mandatory DNA Collection During Arrest is Unconstitutional, Court Says](#)

by Maura Dolan, *The Los Angeles Times*

An appeals court decided unanimously that California’s practice of taking DNA from people arrested for felonies - though not necessarily convicted or even charged - violates the state constitution.

### ▶ [The FBI Is Very Excited About This Machine That Can Scan Your DNA in 90 Minutes](#)

by Shane Bauer, *Mother Jones*

Rapid-DNA technology makes it easier than ever to grab and store your genetic profile. G-men, cops, and Homeland Security can't wait to see it everywhere.

### ▶ [Bill to Have All Russians Fingerprinted and DNA Profiled Submitted to Parliament](#)

*Russia Today*

MPs from the populist nationalist party LDPR have prepared and drafted a motion requiring universal fingerprinting and DNA profiling of all Russian citizens for reasons of security.

### ▶ [Who Owns the Biggest Biotech Discovery of the Century?](#)

by Antonio Regalado, *MIT Technology Review*

At stake are rights to an invention that may be the most important new genetic engineering technique since the beginning of the biotechnology age in the 1970s: the CRISPR system.

▶ [Sweet Peach Founder Speaks: Those Startup Dudes Were Wrong About My Company](#)

by Jeff Bercovici, *Inc*

Speaking for herself now, the 'ultrafeminist' 20-year-old founder explains what her controversial product for women really does.

▶ [Synthetic Biologist Aims to Create Pig with Human Lungs](#)

by Lisa M. Krieger, *San Jose Mercury News*

Led by scientists like Venter and Endy, the once-fledgling field of synthetic biology has surged in commercial interest.

▶ [Gene Therapy: Editorial Control](#)

by Katharine Gammon, *Nature News*

Correcting the genetic error in sickle-cell disease might be as simple as amending text.

▶ [Synthetic Enzymes Hint at Life Without DNA or RNA](#)

by Andy Coghlan, *New Scientist*

For the first time, enzymes that don't exist in nature have been made from genetic material that doesn't exist in nature either, called XNA, or xeno nucleic acid.

▶ [Help Children Based on Genes? 'A Bad Use of Science'](#)

by Laura Hercher, *The New York Times*

The idea that we should sort children into groups based on genetics and then treat those groups differently is unsettling to many people, as well it should be.

▶ [Whose Genome is it Anyway? Ethics and Whole Genome Sequencing Before Birth](#)

by Dr. Ainsley Newson, *Reuters*

A geneticist's decision to obtain the whole genome sequence of his partner's fetus in utero suggests why we should look before we leap into this kind of prenatal testing.

▶ [Feature: Peering Into My Genome](#)

by Jennifer Couzin-Frankel, *Science*

I've chronicled the scientific advances, the ethical quandaries, the lives testing saves, the angst it ignites. I had never turned the lens on my own DNA.

▶ [Undercover Assessment of Five Commercial NIPT Labs Points to Need for Better Quality Control](#)

by Julia Karow, *GenomeWeb*

Three of five commercial laboratories offering noninvasive prenatal testing reported normal results in samples from women who weren't even pregnant.

▶ [Science For Sale: Diet-Based DNA Testing Veers into Marketing](#)

by Kelly Crowe, *CBC News*

Are scientists looking for answers they can sell, not necessarily for personal gain, but because that's the only way they can get any funding at all?

▶ [Discrimination Based on Genetics Could Soon be Illegal, and it's](#)

## [Right on Time](#)

by William Wolfe-Wylie, *Canada.com*

As personalized genetic testing hits the mainstream, what companies do with that information is of growing concern.

### ▶ ['Platinum' Genome Takes on Disease](#)

by Ewen Callaway, *Nature News*

Several research efforts are closing in on a truly complete human genome sequence, called the platinum genome.

### ▶ [The Search for Exceptional Genomes](#)

by Antonio Regalado, *MIT Technology Review*

They walk among us. Natural experiments, living ordinary lives, unaware that their genes may hold the clue to the next superdrug.

### ▶ [Massive Man Versus Mouse Genome Project Publishes Results](#)

by Katie Howe, *BioNews*

A comprehensive international study has revealed striking similarities as well as some significant differences in the regulation of mouse and human genomes.

### ▶ [UCLA Researchers Announce Gene Therapy Cure for 18 'Bubble Baby' Patients](#)

by Cath Becker and Suzan Clarke, *Good Morning America*

Researchers announced they have cured 18 children who were born with a genetic disorder that leaves them without a working immune system.

### ▶ [Exclusive: First Gene Therapy Drug Sets Million-Euro Price Record](#)

by Ludwig Burger and Ben Hirschler, *Reuters*

The Western world's first gene therapy drug is set to go on sale in Germany with a \$1.4 million price tag, a new record for a medicine to treat a rare disease.

### ▶ [Evaluating California's Stem Cell Experiment](#)

by David E. Jensen, *Sacramento Bee*

CIRM expects to be taking part in 10 early-stage clinical trials this year; however, no California-financed cures or therapies have reached the clinic and none are likely to do so for years.

### ▶ [The Real Deal with Stem Cell Therapy in the Philippines](#)

*The Philippine Star*

There is a big difference between "magic potions" offered by unscrupulous clinics and the real scientific approach to stem cell therapy.

### ▶ [New Interview with FDA on Key Stem Cell Regulatory Issues & Its Own Research](#)

by Paul Knoepfler, *Knoepfler Lab Stem Cell Blog*

An interview with the FDA on key pressing stem cell issues, including Right To Try Laws, the agency's approach to dubious stem cell clinics, and its own research on stem cells.

### ▶ [The Problematic Hunt for a 'Gay Gene'](#)

by Samantha Allen, *The Daily Beast*

Another week, another study declaring the hunt for the 'gay gene' over. Why are we so hung up on a biological answer for homosexuality?

### ▶ [Thailand's Parliament Approves Bill Banning Commercial surrogacy](#)

*Associated Press in Bangkok*

The decision follows several surrogacy scandals this year, including one in which an Australian couple left behind a baby with Down syndrome.

### [Twins: The Fetal Paradox](#)

by Amy Klein, *Newsweek*

Although twins and triplets come with short- and long-term health risks to both mother and baby, most fertility clinics are still transferring two, three, or four embryos to ensure higher success rates.

### ▶ [The Ethics of Egg Freezing](#)

by Margaret Somerville, *National Post*

Will a woman who does not choose to postpone starting a family be seen as insufficiently committed to her profession?

### ▶ [Indian Sterilisation Patient: 'I was Slapped and Told to Calm Down'](#)

by Alok Putul and Anu Anand, *The Guardian*

A woman recounts her treatment at a camp where 15 died after taking antibiotics possibly tainted by rat poison.

### ▶ [Peru Forcibly Sterilized 300,000 Poor Women in the '90s. Now They Could Decide the Country's Future.](#)

by Iain Aitch, *New Republic*

A new interactive documentary made in Peru may just help decide the political future of the whole country.

### ▶ [Stephen Hawking Warns Artificial Intelligence Could End Mankind](#)

by Rory Cellan-Jones, *BBC*

Hawking says the primitive forms of AI developed so far have already proved very useful, but he fears the consequences of creating something that can match or surpass humans.

### ▶ [He May Have Unravalled DNA, but James Watson Deserves to be Shunned](#)

by Adam Rutherford, *The Guardian*

The scientist is crying poverty and selling his Nobel prize medal, but why should anyone be interested in his racist, sexist views?

### ▶ [US Government Cracks Down on Clinical-Trials Reporting](#)

by Sara Reardon, *Nature News*

Proposed regulations would close loopholes that allow researchers to hide negative data.

### ▶ [Cellular 'Computers' Gain a Hard Drive](#)

by Brendan Borrell, *Nature News*

DNA-based memory can record multiple inputs from engineered gene circuits.

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