



CENTER FOR
GENETICS
AND SOCIETY

BioPolitical

News&Views

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SPOTLIGHT



Charpentier and Doudna Win the Nobel

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.08.2020
This award is an opportunity to celebrate the importance of women in science, and a chance to broaden the discussion about how human genome editing should be used.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



California Eugenics Legacies Project

An online symposium in May 2021 will examine the role of California's institutions of higher education — including UC, CSU, and private colleges and universities — in promoting, sustaining, and mainstreaming eugenics. The event will be organized by the California Eugenics Legacies Project, an interdisciplinary network of academics, educators, and others including the Center for Genetics and Society. The project is supported by an award from the University of California Humanities Research Institute, and welcomes interested participants. For information, contact Miroslava Chavez-Garcia at mchavezgarcia@history.ucsb.edu or Susan Schweik at sschweik@berkeley.edu.



Trump's "Racehorse Theory" and Why it Matters

[Jonathan Kahn, Marcy Darnovsky, and Jonathan Marks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 10.05.2020

When Trump talks about his own and his supporters' good genes, he is encouraging his followers to see certain others as having bad genes, or perhaps as "polluting" our body politic. This insidious idea has provided the foundation for some of the most unjust, repressive, and inhumane regimes in human history.

CGS IN THE NEWS

Here's What You Need to Know About Proposition 14

[Terry McSweeney](#), *NBC Bay Area* | 10.04.2020

Supporters said the research has already lead to important medical breakthroughs, including for COVID-19 victims. Opponents said the proposition is more "shameless overpromising" with money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Your 'Ethnicity Estimate' Doesn't Mean What You Think It Does

[Caitlin Harrington](#), *Wired* | 10.02.2020

"They're tying these traits to your DNA and to a particular ethnicity," says Katie Hasson, program director on genetic justice at the Center for Genetics and Society. "There's a real danger that it reinforces the mistaken, outdated, and dangerous idea that race and ethnicity are biological, and all of the ills that have come along with that."

Clean Slate Endorsements, Fall 2020

San Francisco Bay Guardian | 10.01.2020

Proposition 14: Big pharma should fund stem cell research. "The Center for Genetics and Society, a progressive forward-thinking group in Berkeley, opposes this measure. So do we."

WHAT WE'RE READING

NOBEL FOR CRISPR | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | EUGENICS TODAY | EUGENICS HISTORICAL CONTEXT | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | GENE THERAPY | ANIMAL TECHNOLOGIES

NOBEL FOR CRISPR

Nobel Prize in Chemistry Awarded to 2 Scientists for Work on Genome Editing

[Katherine J. Wu, Carl Zimmer and Elian Peltier](#), *New York Times* | 10.07.2020

"We as a community need to make sure we recognize we are taking charge of a very powerful technology," Dr. Doudna said. "I hope this announcement galvanizes that intention."

Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to two women who developed CRISPR, a revolutionary gene-editing tool

[Ben Guarino](#), *The Washington Post* | 10.07.2020

“This year’s prize is about rewriting the code of life,” said Goran K. Hansson, secretary general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. “I wish that this will provide a positive message, specifically, to young girls who would like to follow the path of science,” Charpentier told reporters Wednesday morning.

CRISPR’s Adaptation to Genome Editing Earns Chemistry Nobel

[Amanda Heidt](#), *The Scientist* | 10.07.2020

Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna reprogrammed the bacterial immune response into one of the most popular tools for genetics and molecular biology.

Scientists win Nobel chemistry prize for 'genetic scissors'

[Linda Geddes](#), *The Guardian* | 10.07.2020

Doudna has previously admitted to worrying about how the technology she helped develop might be used, including even dreaming that Hitler approached her about potential applications. “Global transparency is a key step in ensuring responsible use of the technology in the future,” she said.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Heritable human genome editing: making ‘societal dialogue’ meaningful

[Jackie Leach Scully](#), *Nuffield Council Blog* | 10.02.2020

Gesturing towards comprehensive public involvement in decisions about heritable genome editing is laudable. Unfortunately, the ritual invocations in reports like these often give the impression of either being a performative duty, or revealing extreme naivety about the real complexity of the kind of public engagement needed.

Societal Debates About Emerging Genetic Technologies: Toward a Science of Public Engagement

[Christopher D. Wirz](#), [Dietram A. Scheufele](#) & [Dominique Brossard](#), *Environmental Communication* | 09.29.2020

Gene editing is an inherently wicked problem with no single right answer and no group uniquely positioned to decide this answer. This special issue discusses the intricacies of the debates surrounding both plant and human applications of gene editing.

EUGENICS TODAY

Immigrants Say They Were Pressured Into Unneeded Surgeries

[Caitlin Dickerson](#), [Seth Freed Wessler](#) and [Miriam Jordan](#), *The New York Times* | 09.29.2020

Immigrants detained at an ICE-contracted center in Georgia had invasive gynecology procedures that they later learned were unnecessary, and fit a pattern of “excessively aggressive surgical intervention without adequate trial of medical remedies.”

Georgia ICE detainees tell congressional delegation of unwanted gynecological procedures

[Alan Judd](#), *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* | 09.26.2020

“If you take a blade to a woman’s body, you need to have informed consent,” [Rep.] Ruiz said. “Otherwise, it is an assault.”

COVID-19 data on Native Americans is ‘a national disgrace.’ This scientist is fighting to be counted

[Lizzie Wade](#), *Science* | 09.24.2020

Abigail Echo-Hawk can't even count how many times she's been called a troublemaker. "I didn't used to know what to say," she says. "Now, my answer is, 'Is calling for justice making trouble?' ... The system of colonialism in the United States has created, and continues to increase risk factors for, poor health outcomes in Native communities."

EUGENICS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Stanford will rename campus spaces named for David Starr Jordan and relocate statue depicting Louis Agassiz

[Chris Peacock](#), *Stanford News* | 10.08.2020

The decision follows a review conducted this summer by a committee of faculty, staff, students and alumni.

The Long and Sordid History of Forced Sterilization Programs

[Cynthia R. Greenlee](#), *Medium* | 09.23.2020

At one time, virtually every state advocated "human betterment" by culling the ranks of so-called undesirable people — often working-class White people, girls and women judged to be sexually precocious or promiscuous, the mentally ill, the incarcerated or substance abusers, and those with chronic illnesses. Increasingly, those undesirables were Black, Latinx, and Native people.

The racist and classist roots of standardized testing found a home at Stanford — and they still endure today

[Georgia Rosenberg](#), *The Stanford Daily* | 09.22.2020

Alfred Binet's IQ tests inspired Stanford psychologist Lewis Terman, a convinced eugenicist who viewed intelligence as an innate, biological difference between racial groups. Carl Brigham, also a eugenicist, built on Terman's work to develop the SAT in 1926, which helps entrench cultural biases to this day.

America's Ugly History With Selective Sterilization Against Women of Color

[Thelma Annan](#), *Popsugar* | 09.22.2020

Forced sterilization in America is not a random imitation of Nazi eugenic history; it's a vile continuation of our own. This timeline presents key dates relating to the history of forced sterilization in the U.S., from the 19th century through the 21st.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Is it "fraud" when you sell bad sperm as good?

[Alison Motluck](#), *HeyReprotech Newsletter* | 10.06.2020

A donor profile features a man in tip top health with a stellar career. A sperm bank promotes his product. If the man is actually mentally ill, unemployed and has a criminal record, is that consumer fraud?

Gay men in Russia with surrogate children warned they face arrest

[Oliver Carroll](#), *The Independent* | 10.02.2020

State investigators are equating single fathers to baby traffickers, and warning that they will arrest men with "non-traditional orientation." Russia's LGBT+ communities are concerned, though a veteran activist cautioned against drawing conclusions beyond the realm of one criminal case.

GENE THERAPY

Berlin patient: First person cured of HIV, Timothy Ray Brown, dies

[James Gallagher](#), *BBC* | 09.30.2020

After Brown received a bone marrow transplant from a donor who was naturally resistant to HIV, the virus was never detected in his body again. He was in effect "cured." But the leukemia, which led to his HIV cure, returned earlier this year and spread to his brain and spinal cord.

The End of Deafness

[Emily Mullin](#), *Medium* | 09.29.2020

Tweaking a person's DNA could provide hearing to those born without it, but not everyone thinks deafness needs to be 'cured.'

ANIMAL TECHNOLOGIES

Gene-Silencing Pesticides Pose New Risks to Health, Environment and Farmers

[Friends of the Earth](#) | 10.06.2020

A new report by Friends of the Earth and Dr. Eva Sirinathsinghji summarizes the gaps in research on experimental gene-silencing pesticides and the risks they pose to human health, the environment, and farmers.

Genetically modified horse embryo tech could be used to enhance performance

[Sarah Radford](#), *Horse and Hound* | 10.02.2020

Researchers in Argentina have produced what is believed to be the world's first genetically edited horse embryo, using CRISPR/Cas9 technology to try to knock out the myostatin gene (MSTN), which negatively regulates muscle mass development.

Majority of Respondents Support Chimeric Animal Research: Survey

[Amanda Heidt](#), *The Scientist* | 10.01.2020

Almost 60 percent of people in a new study on attitudes in the US felt comfortable using animals to grow human organs from induced pluripotent stem cells.

Gene editing: Chinese scientists bring safer pig-to-human organ transplants one step closer to reality

[Coco Feng](#), *South China Morning Post* | 09.23.2020

The risks of organ rejection and transmitting porcine viruses have limited the use in humans of transplants from pigs, but advances in gene-editing technology could change this.

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