



DONATE



CENTER FOR
GENETICS
AND SOCIETY

BioPolitical

News&Views

March 31, 2022

SPOTLIGHT



War in Ukraine Exacerbates Problems with Surrogacy Industry

Emily Galpern, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.31.2022

News about surrogacy in wartime Ukraine has primarily focused on dramatic rescues of newborns and harrowing border crossings, sidelining the rights and well-being of surrogates. Power imbalances between parents and surrogates, inadequate clinic oversight, and the commodification of women's reproductive capacity—all common elements in the global surrogacy industry—are only exacerbated in the context of war.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CGS Advisory Board member Dorothy Roberts wins 2022 Leadership Prize from the Juvenile Law Center

CGS Advisory Board member Dorothy E. Roberts was awarded the 2022 Leadership Prize, which the Juvenile Law Center awards "to outstanding individuals...fighting for the rights and well-being of youth in the child welfare and justice systems." Roberts was honored for providing "an historically accurate understanding of

the racism throughout our history and an abolition framework for a future vision of family respect and child well-being.”

COMMENTARY



Gene of the Week Redux?

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.31.2022

The analysis of genome-wide association studies and the promotion of questionable “polygenic risk scores” are fashionable, but are they really more meaningful than the “gene-for” claims of yesteryear?



Opposing Designer Babies

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.22.2022

Why Your Movement Should Oppose Designer Babies, organized by the UK group **Stop Designer Babies**, was arguably more significant than the 3-day virtual event put on by the Royal Society, for all their resources and institutional clout.

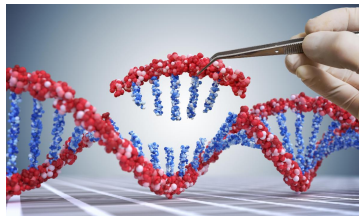
CGS IN THE NEWS



Safety Concerns For Ukrainian Surrogate Mothers And Babies

[Bianca Facchinei](#), *Newsy* | 03.25.2022

The chaos highlights what some say is a lack of safeguards in global surrogacy, which is an industry estimated to be worth billions and still growing. “International surrogacy is really fraught...It's much more complicated than domestic surrogacy,” said CGS consultant Emily Galpern.



Should we use genome editing to make better babies? Here's what the experts think

[Tim Brinkhof](#), *Big Think* | 03.23.2022

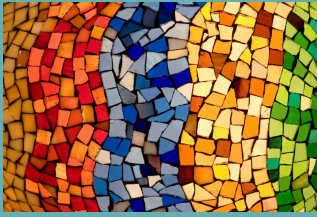
The one-hour debate on heritable genome editing “served as a summary of the most compelling arguments for and against using our scientific knowledge to improve the DNA of future generations.” CGS Executive Director Marcy Darnovsky and Françoise Baylis argued against the use of heritable genome editing to “make better babies,” while futurist Amy Webb and geneticist George Church argued in favor.

WHAT WE'RE READING

SURROGACY 360 | HUMAN GENOME EDITING | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION
EUGENICS | GENOMICS | VARIOUS

Surrogacy in Ukraine

Surrogacy360 | 03.31.2022



The CGS resource Surrogacy360 has curated recent articles covering the impacts of the war on surrogates and their families, stranded babies, and intended parents struggling to retrieve their newborns. See Newsy's interview of CGS' Emily Galpern on the importance of regulation; the story of a surrogate who is 10 weeks pregnant with twins; and videos of women caring for surrogate-born babies in a basement shelter.

HUMAN GENOME EDITING

Are we about to cure sickle cell disease?

[Dhruv Khullar](#), *The New Yorker* | 03.22.2022

If we truly want to cure sickle-cell disease, editing genomes will only get us so far. We'll need to rewrite our medical system, too.

As creator of 'CRISPR babies' nears release from prison, where does embryo editing stand?

[Jon Cohen](#), *Science* | 03.21.2022

Many scientists say the increased awareness of CRISPR's shortcomings has underscored the recklessness of transplanting edited embryos with the technology available today.

'We should be prepared': bioethicists look at how to care for China's gene-edited babies

[Echo Xie](#), *South China Morning Post* | 03.20.2022

The scientist responsible for the gene-edited babies, He Jiankui, was jailed for his experiment that drew global condemnation when he revealed it in 2018. Two prominent Chinese bioethicists are calling on the government to protect the children.

Genome editing products: FDA recommends at least 15 years of follow-up after clinical trials

[Zachary Brennan](#), *Endpoints News* | 03.15.2022

Given specific risks associated with gene therapies, including unintended consequences of on- and off-target editing, new draft guidance recommends at least 15 years of long-term follow-up after clinical trials.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Polygenic embryo testing: understated ethics, unclear utility

[Josephine Johnston and Lucas J. Matthews](#), *Nature* | 03.21.2022

New methods in polygenic embryo testing could expand its availability, but fail to demonstrate its utility. Not only do inequities in access pose an ethical problem, but investment in polygenic embryo testing will also divert resources away from structural solutions to health and disability challenges and toward individual responsibility for managing disease risk.

"I Just Want To Live": A Pregnant Surrogate In Ukraine Speaks Out

[Lizzie Cernik and Anastasiia Levchenko](#), *Refinery29* | 03.16.2022

Stories of babies being rescued from Ukraine have flooded the media, but the precarious situations of the surrogates aren't always hitting headlines with the same force. One Ukrainian surrogate, Tanya, has remained in Ukraine and fears for her elderly parents, her brother fighting in the war, and her own

children—while also trying to safely gestate twins for an American couple.

Sperm Banks Struggle to Recruit Black Donors and Other Donors of Color

[Amy Dockser Marcus](#), *The Wall Street Journal* | 02.26.2022

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated a years-long shortage of Black sperm donors and all donors of color. The shortage is one of many disparities that Black patients face when seeking fertility care, including less access to trained fertility specialists.

EUGENICS

Some past *Science News* coverage was racist and sexist. We're deeply sorry

Science News | 03.24.2022

The most egregious failing was supportive coverage of eugenics, a field of study and associated practices born from the false belief that humankind could be improved if reproduction were limited to people judged to have the most desirable traits. Our founding editor and several founding board members were proponents of eugenics. Uncritical coverage picked up again in the 1960s, during a resurgence in eugenic ideas.

Silicon Valley's Favorite Weird Philosophy Is Fundamentally Wrong

[Susan B. Levin](#), *Slate* | 03.22.2022

Transhumanism is far from a household term, but its adherents are in places of power, especially in Silicon Valley. Arguably, its closest antecedent is Anglo-American eugenics; among the many substantive parallels are an insistence that science set humanity's guiding aspirations, and that human intelligence and moral attitudes (such as altruism and self-control) require major, biological augmentation.

GENOMICS

Experts push for genetic testing to personalise drug prescriptions

[Linda Geddes](#), *The Guardian* | 03.28.2022

Most people carry at least one genetic variation that affects their response to commonly prescribed drugs. A new report recommends that the NHS implement widespread pharmacogenomic testing, which allows prescribing according to people's genes, in order to reduce adverse drug reactions and improve patient outcomes.

How natural "short sleepers" thrive on 4 hours of sleep per night

[Ross Pomeroy](#), *Big Think* | 03.28.2022

Mutations in a few genes allow natural "short sleepers" to thrive on only four to six hours of sleep per night and may also protect against neurodegenerative diseases. Could drugs or gene editing make it possible for those who are not "short sleepers" to sleep more efficiently?

This Database Stores the DNA of 31,000 New Yorkers. Is It Illegal?

[Troy Closson](#), *The New York Times* | 03.22.2022

New York law requires a conviction or a court order before someone's DNA can be stored in the state-run database, but a database in New York City includes DNA from people who have been arrested or questioned but not convicted.

Scientists say they can read nearly the whole genome of an IVF-created embryo

[Jennifer Couzin-Frankel](#), *Science* | 03.21.2022

Screening days-old embryos created through IVF for common disease risks may not be accurate because these tests don't account for the role of the environment in disease development or

incorporate populations of non-European ancestry.

Africa: sequence 100,000 species to safeguard biodiversity

[ThankGod Echezona Ebenezer et al.](#), *Nature* | 03.15.2022

The African BioGenome Project aims to sequence the genomes of 105,000 endemic species: plants, animals, fungi, protists, and other eukaryotes. This store of reference genomes — built in Africa, for Africa — will help plant and animal breeders to produce resilient and sustainable food systems and will inform biodiversity conservation across the continent.

VARIOUS

In a first, brain implant lets man with complete paralysis spell out thoughts: 'I love my cool son.'

[Kelly Servick](#), *Science* | 03.22.2022

A new study suggests that people whose brains have lost all control over their bodies can still signal intended movements consistently enough to allow some meaningful communication. Through neurofeedback detected by electrode arrays implanted in the brain, a 36-year-old man with ALS was able to slowly construct sentences and communicate with researchers.

World-renowned Dalhousie Bioethicist and Battery Pioneer Win Prestigious Killam Prize

[Andrew Riley and Caitlyn MacDonald](#), *Dal News* | 03.15.2022

Françoise Baylis was awarded the 2022 Killam Prize, offered annually to distinguished Canadian scholars. A world-renowned bioethicist, Baylis has written widely on the ethics of human genome editing. She co-authored with CGS' Marcy Darnovsky and Katie Hasson the article "Human Germline and Heritable Genome Editing: The Global Policy Landscape," published in *CRISPR Journal* in 2020.

Mice Birthed From Unfertilized Eggs for the First Time

[Margaret Osborne](#), *Smithsonian Magazine* | 03.14.2022

A mouse that was produced from a single unfertilized egg edited with CRISPR to mimic an egg fertilized by a male has reached adulthood. This method of asexual reproduction was previously thought to be impossible in mammals.

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

Will you support CGS by making a donation today?

[DONATE](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#) | [WEBSITE](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [WHO WE ARE](#) | [CONTACT](#)



[DONATE](#)