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GENETICS
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BioPolitical

News&Views

July 20, 2023

SPOTLIGHT



Lessons From A Cloning Scandal: Hwang Woo-Suk, Movie Star

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 07.07.2023

A new Netflix documentary chronicling the spectacular rise and scandal-ridden fall of South Korean stem cell scientist Hwang Woo-Suk misses its chance to highlight lessons that are relevant in today's biotech landscape.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PAUL K. LONGMORE
Institute on
Disability

Longmore Institute Emerge Symposium

July 28, 2023 | 12–6 pm PT

Join the Longmore Institute on July 28th for a hybrid symposium featuring presentations from the Emerge Fellowship's inaugural cohort of disability studies scholar-activists. Attend in person at SFSU's Seven Hills Conference Center or virtually. Register for the symposium [here](#).

CGS IN THE NEWS

Startup aims to make lab-grown human eggs, transforming options for creating families

Rob Stein, *NPR* | 07.15.2023

Lab-made gametes, heritable genome editing, and commercialization



are a “toxic stew to create people who are supposedly biologically superior to others,” said CGS’ Marcy Darnovsky. “We don’t want to pave the road toward any kind of future that looks anything like that.”



Designer Babies: Examining the Ethics of Genetic Testing

[Tracy Lowe](#), *Parentology* | 06.21.2023

Uses of polygenic embryo screening for schizophrenia and other mental illnesses “directly echo eugenic efforts to eliminate ‘feeble-mindedness.’ We are talking about deciding who should be born based on ‘good’ and ‘bad’ genes,” said CGS Associate Director Katie Hasson.

WHAT WE’RE READING

GENE EDITING | EUGENICS | GENE THERAPIES
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | VARIOUS

GENE EDITING

This company plans to transplant gene-edited pig hearts into babies next year

[Jessica Hamzelou](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 07.17.2023

A company is planning to transplant gene-edited pig organs into babies with congenital heart problems. Their test surgeries on infant baboons have been unsuccessful so far.

Researchers turn to CRISPR to unlock one of the trickiest diseases to treat: Alzheimer’s

[Andrew Joseph](#), *STAT* | 07.16.2023

Could CRISPR be used to treat Alzheimer’s? One team is researching edits that could reduce production of a contributing protein, while another aims to reduce the activity of a higher-risk genetic variant.

New Genetic Engineering – Small Cause, Big Effect

[Benedikt Haerlin](#), *ARC2020* | 07.07.2023

A new European Commission proposal on genome-edited plants would be the end of precautionary and transparent genetic engineering policies in place in the EU since 1990.

Controversial Chinese scientist He Jiankui proposes new gene editing research

[Simone McCarthy](#), *CNN* | 07.03.2023

He Jiankui, the scientist who sparked global outrage in 2018 when he revealed that he had created the first gene-edited children, issued a new proposal for embryo modification. It was immediately met with skepticism and condemnation.

New study warning of dangers of gene editing in human embryos has relevance for agricultural GMOs

[Claire Robinson](#), *GMWatch* | 07.03.2023

New research indicates that the cells of early human embryos are often unable to repair damage to their DNA caused by the CRISPR/Cas gene editing process. The implications of the findings extend to gene editing in animals and plants, casting more doubt on its viability and safety.

How gene-edited microbiomes could improve our health

[Jessica Hamzelou](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 06.30.2023

Scientists are trying to modify the genomes of microbes both to improve the health of human gut

microbiomes and to curtail the amount of methane produced in cows' intestines, reducing their climate impact.

Warnings to Avoid Using CRISPR-Cas9 on Human Embryos Reinforced by New Findings

Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News | 06.27.2023

New findings that the cells of early human embryos are often unable to repair damage to their DNA provide a warning that gene editing may have unwanted and potentially dangerous consequences if applied to human embryos.

EUGENICS

Japan tries to turn page on eugenics policies, but related ideas persist

Tomoko Otake, *The Japan Times* | 07.11.2023

A parliamentary report on Japan's former eugenic law recognizes the country's history of forced sterilizations but fails to explore why eugenic legacies linger and what the government should do to prevent their continued impact on people with disabilities.

Putting organs into the deep freeze, a scavenger hunt for robots, and a book on race and reproduction

Sarah Crespi, Angela Saini, and Warren Cornwall, *Science* | 06.29.2023

Angela Saini interviews Dorothy Roberts about her book *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* in the third segment of this podcast.

Eugenics, Environmental Ruin, and Surveillance: The Story of Silicon Valley

Edward Ongweso Jr., *The Nation* | 06.23.2023

Eugenic ideas and practices paved the way for inequalities in social and economic policies that facilitated the success of a few in Silicon Valley at the expense of many.

Anger in Japan as report reveals children were forcibly sterilised

Justin McCurry, *The Guardian* | 06.22.2023

Victims and advocates renewed calls for redress after a new government report revealed that children as young as nine were among the 16,500 people forcibly sterilized under a Japanese eugenics law between 1948 and 1966.

Children from Gamete-like Cells: Dishing up a Eugenic Future

Stuart Newman and Tina Stevens, *Independent Science News* | 06.19.2023

Elite science society meetings should not obscure the fact that manufacturing synthetic embryos will blur the boundaries between humans and objects and, further, provide an incentive for "quality control" that develops into a platform for eugenics.

The Acronym Behind Our Wildest AI Dreams and Nightmares

Émile P. Torres, *Truthdig* | 06.15.2023

Transhumanism—the backbone of the bundle of ideologies some are calling TESCREALism — stems from eugenic legacies and hopes to advance a "liberal eugenics" built on a deeply impoverished utopianism.

GENE THERAPIES

Sickle cell cures are coming. African children can't be left behind

Jayasree K. Iyer, *STAT* | 07.12.2023

With their multi-million dollar price tags, gene therapies for sickle cell disease will be inaccessible in sub-Saharan Africa, home to more than 60% of the 120 million people worldwide living with this disease.

10x Less: A Proposal to Slash Multimillion-Dollar Costs of Gene Therapies by a Factor of 10

David Jensen, *California Stem Cell Report* | 07.07.2023

After a year-long study, the Innovative Genomics Institute has proposed a new model to make gene therapies that now carry multimillion-dollar price tags more affordable.

FDA Approves First Gene Therapy for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Alice Park, *Time* | 06.22.2023

The FDA approved a gene therapy for Duchenne muscular dystrophy for children ages 4-5. The single-injection therapy helps conserve muscle function, but it comes with a hefty price tag.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Italy begins stripping lesbian mothers of their parental rights

Molly Sprayregen, *LGBTQNation* | 07.17.2023

In conjunction with its crackdown on LGBTQ+ rights, the Italian government has begun retroactively stripping same-sex parents of their legal connection to their children.

China launches campaign to crack down on illegal fertility treatments

Farah Master, *Reuters* | 07.11.2023

China is cracking down on illegal activities related to the use of assisted reproductive technologies, including surrogacy and the buying or selling of sperm or eggs.

Introducing: The Retrievals

Susan Burton, *The New York Times and Serial Productions* | 06.22.2023

Patient reports of severe pain in egg retrieval procedures at the Yale Fertility Center were repeatedly dismissed, until it was discovered that a nurse replaced their pain medication with saline. A new podcast asks: Why do we not take women's pain seriously?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The six-billion-dollar post-human

Paul Dempsey, *The Institution of Engineering and Technology* | 07.10.2023

As the FDA weighs clinical trials of brain-computer interface systems, ethical questions abound: Could BCIs be perverted to foster eugenics or create a species of 'post-human' overlords? Could they be combined with AI in unanticipated and dangerous ways?

Why everyone is mad about New York's AI hiring law

Tate Ryan-Mosley, *MIT Technology Review* | 07.10.2023

NYC's new Automated Employment Decision Tool law requires employers who use AI in hiring to tell candidates they are doing so and to submit to audits to prove their systems are not racist or sexist. But is the law enforceable and does it go far enough?

EU moves closer to passing one of world's first laws governing AI

Lisa O'Carroll, *The Guardian* | 06.14.2023

The European parliament approved rules aimed at setting a global standard for artificial intelligence, including automated medical diagnoses, but the regulations would not come into effect until 2026.

VARIOUS

At \$20K, Stem Cell Eye Injections May Also Cost Patients Their Sight

Sophie Putka, *MedPage Today* | 06.26.2023

Patients at a Florida clinic who received injections of autologous bone marrow-derived stem cells that were supposed to fix their vision instead found that the procedure did nothing or further damaged their vision.

Scores of Critical Lab Tests Fall Into a Regulatory Void. The FDA Is Trying to Close It.

Anna Clark, *ProPublica* | 06.14.2023

Lab-developed tests like prenatal screenings have become increasingly popular, all while escaping the bulk of federal scrutiny over marketing and accuracy. Now, the FDA is beginning the process of imposing regulations on these kinds of tests.

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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