



BioPolitical

News&Views

October 25, 2024

SPOTLIGHT

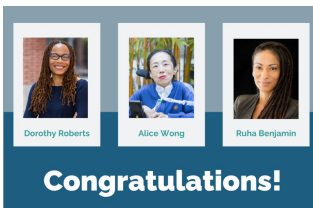


US startup charging couples to ‘screen embryos for IQ’

Hannah Devlin, Tom Burgis, David Pegg and Jason Wilson, *The Guardian* | 10.18.2024

Embryo screening for IQ “normalises this idea of ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ genetics” said CGS’ Katie Hasson. The rollout of such technologies “reinforces the belief that inequality comes from biology rather than social causes.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS



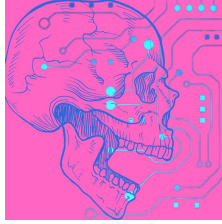
Congratulations to Dorothy Roberts, Alice Wong, and Ruha Benjamin!

Congratulations to **CGS Advisory Board** member and newly named MacArthur Fellow **Dorothy Roberts**! The award recognizes her decades of work exposing inequalities and racism in reproductive healthcare, genetic technologies, and the child welfare system. CGS also celebrates two other newly minted MacArthur Fellows who have made valuable contributions to CGS’ work: disability justice activist **Alice Wong** and scholar of social inequality and science **Ruha Benjamin**.



Panel Conversation: “The Bitter Legacy of Eugenics in the Current Election”

CGS Executive Director Marcy Darnovsky participated in a panel conversation on “The Bitter Legacy of Eugenics in the Current Election” hosted by NYU Langone’s Division of Medical Ethics. View the recording [here](#) with the password **4^i5xQ9p**.

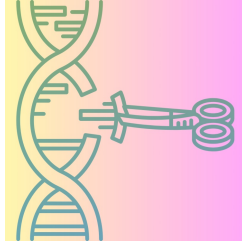


The New Artificial Intelligentsia

Ruha Benjamin, *Los Angeles Review of Books* | 10.18.2024

From the fifth essay of the **Legacies of Eugenics series**: “The artificial intelligentsia is dragging us into an archaic future where intelligence is quantified, fixed, and ranked, and smartness is fetishized. We would do well to remember that IQ is, above all, a eugenic concept.”

COMMENTARY



South Africa amended its research guidelines to allow for heritable human genome editing

Françoise Baylis and Katie Hasson, *The Conversation* | 10.24.2024

A little-noticed change to South Africa’s national health research guidelines appears to position the country as the first to explicitly permit the use of genome editing to create genetically modified children.

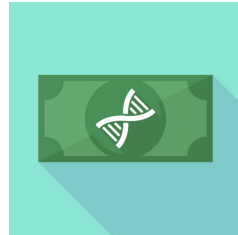


Trump’s Eugenic Fantasies

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.08.2024

The widespread slap-down of Trumpian eugenics and race science is heartening, but it’s remarkable that it took so long. Critics, including CGS, have been calling out his “racehorse theory” of breeding for years, though mainstream media has been reluctant to focus on it.

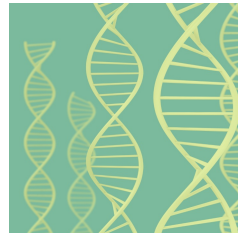
CGS IN THE NEWS



Super-expensive startup “screening” parents’ embryos for IQ

Maggie Harrison Dupré, *Futurism* | 10.19.2024

Embryo screening companies sell the idea that they can screen for intelligence, even though both the concept of IQ, and its supposed genetic links, are highly questionable. CGS’ Katie Hasson points out that use of these screening tools, even if inaccurate, reinforces eugenic ideas.



What Do You Risk With At-Home DNA Test Kits?

Ashleigh Wyss, *Listnr* | 10.09.2024

On the podcast *The Briefing*, CGS’ Katie Hasson explains how DNA testing companies’ business model involves “amassing a giant database of genetic information...[T]hat is where the value is: in the data that comes from the spit that everyone is sending them.”

WHAT WE’RE READING

GENOMICS | GENE THERAPY | EUGENICS
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | SURROGACY360 | VARIOUS

GENOMICS

The risks of sharing your DNA with online companies aren’t a future concern. They’re here now

Nila Bala, *Los Angeles Times* | 10.21.2024

DNA commodification is no longer a future concern; it's a present reality. Beyond charging users for their services, some genetic testing companies, including 23andMe, are selling their data to monetize the treasure trove of DNA they have collected.

'De-Extinction' Company Says It's Very, Very Close to a Complete Tasmanian Tiger Genome

Isaac Schutlz, *Gizmodo* | 10.18.2024

Colossal Biosciences, which intends to create proxy species of the woolly mammoth, dodo, and Tasmanian tiger, claims it has made genome editing breakthroughs that bring it closer to the lost marsupial wolf.

'Anonymous' genetic databases vulnerable to privacy leaks

Helen Kudiabor, *Nature* | 10.14.2024

A study has raised concerns that single-cell genetic databases, which are increasingly popular with researchers, could be exploited to reveal the identities of their participants, or link private health information to their public genetic profiles.

In Genetic Data, Gaps That Affect Indigenous Communities

Claudia López Lloreda, *Undark* | 10.02.2024

Clinical tools created using genetic databases, which disproportionately include data from people with European ancestry, do not work as well for indigenous communities in Latin America whose ancestors lived outside Europe.

GENE THERAPY

"Give Cas a Chance": Fyodor Urnov Says He Wants a CRISPR Revolution

Kevin Davies, *Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News* | 10.22.2024

Fyodor Urnov recently called for major reform in how CRISPR gene therapies are developed and regulated.

Life Without Sickle Cell Beckons Boy Who Completed Gene Therapy

Gina Kolata, *The New York Times* | 10.21.2024

After 44 days in the hospital, Kendric Cromer, the first sickle cell patient to receive Bluebird's commercial gene therapy, is going home. His parents say that nothing prepared them for the difficulty of watching him go through intense chemotherapy and its painful, debilitating side effects.

Gene therapy dilemma: Treatment that halts brain disease can also cause cancer

Jocelyn Kaiser, *Science* | 10.09.2024

A new study shows that around 10% of boys treated with a gene therapy for the rare, fatal genetic disorder cerebral adrenoleukodystrophy developed blood cancer after the treatment.

Why gene therapy for sickle cell is slow to catch on with patients

Deena Beasley, *Reuters* | 09.28.2024

High costs, insurance uncertainties, and potential side effects have contributed to hesitation among some people to try new gene therapies and stem cell treatments for sickle cell disease.

EUGENICS

Revealed: International 'race science' network secretly funded by US tech boss

David Pegg, Tom Burgis, Hannah Devlin and Jason Wilson, *The Guardian* | 10.16.2024

An international network of "race science" activists seeking to influence public debate with discredited ideas on race and eugenics has been operating with secret funding from Andrew Conru, a wealthy tech entrepreneur.

Trump's Racist Rants against Immigrants Hide under the Language of Eugenics

[Daniel Vergano](#), *Scientific American* | 10.14.2024

Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric is a page out of the playbook of eugenics—the deeply dishonest scientism that in the early 20th century convinced many people that criminality, poverty and a host of other ills were all inherited.

When Trump talks 'bad genes' and 'racehorse theory,' he is telling us who he is

[Jackie Calmes](#), *Los Angeles Times* | 10.11.2024

Trump's obsession with genes signals his belief in the long-discredited, racist theory of eugenics, the idea (embraced most famously by the Nazis) that selective breeding — eliminating undesirables — can improve a nation's population.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Testing for desirable embryos inconsistent and unreliable, new study says

[Tomoko Otake](#), *The Japan Times* | 10.17.2024

Although screening embryos during the IVF process to select those deemed desirable has faced ethical scrutiny, the testing remains available in many clinics. New research suggests that calculation methods used to produce polygenic risk scores are unreliable: embryos that one method ranked highly were ranked lowest using another method.

Trump says he's the 'father of IVF' — and that he just recently learned what it is

[Dareh Gregorian](#), *NBC News* | 10.17.2024

During a Fox News town hall, former President Donald Trump declared himself "the father of IVF," but also said that he had recently learned what the decades-old procedure actually is.

IVF will be covered by insurance for many Californians after Newsom signs bill

[Mackenzie Mays](#), *Los Angeles Times* | 09.29.2024

Newly passed legislation in California will change the definition of infertility, requiring large health insurance companies to cover IVF, which will expand healthcare benefits to LGBTQ+ families seeking to have children.

SURROGACY 360



Italy Criminalizes Surrogacy From Abroad, a Blow to Gay and Infertile Couples

[Emma Bubola](#), *The New York Times* | 10.16.2024

Italy's Parliament passed a law banning couples from traveling abroad to have a baby through surrogacy arrangements. The law is part of a broader ongoing crackdown by Italy's far-right government to limit legal parentage rights of LGBTQ people.

VARIOUS

What Drugmakers Did Not Tell Volunteers in Alzheimer's Trials

[Walt Bogdanich and Carson Kessler](#), *The New York Times* | 10.23.2024

The drugmaker Esai genetically tested volunteers to identify which were at higher risk of Alzheimer's and of developing brain bleeding or swelling from the drug, but they did not disclose the results to participants—some of whom later died from brain bleeds after taking the drug.

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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