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SPOTLIGHT



Osagie Obasogie elected to National Academy of Medicine

Congratulations to CGS Senior Fellow Osagie Obasogie, a newly elected member of the National Academy of Medicine! Obasogie, who has been associated with CGS for nearly 20 years, was honored for “bringing multidisciplinary insights to understanding race and medicine.”

COMMENTARY



Pfizer (Continues to) Push Its Gene Therapy Products in *Nature* and *Scientific American*

Pete Shanks and Katie Hasson, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.28.2021

A recent Special Report on the future of gene therapy “is editorially independent and was produced with financial support from Pfizer.” The pharmaceutical giant has recently been criticized by public interest organizations for abusing its power to silence governments, throttle supply, shift risk, and maximize profits.

CGS IN THE NEWS



Polygenic screening of embryos is here, but is it ethical?

Philip Ball, *The Guardian* | 10.17.2021

The first child born using the technique arrived last year. Can it really help reduce diseases in a new generation, or is it 'techno-eugenics,' as stated in a recent [Biopolitical Times post](#) by Pete Shanks? CGS' Katie Hasson says: "We are talking about deciding who should be born based on 'good' and 'bad' genes."



Tests génétiques : des recommandations objectives

Christine Mansilla, *Généthique Magazine* | 10.19.2021

A summary (in French) of the [Biopolitical Times post](#) by Pete Shanks and Emily Galpern questioning conflicts of interest in the recent guidelines for carrier screening issued by the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics.



Campus professor Osagie K. Obasogie elected as member to the National Academy of Medicine

Lydia Sidhom, *The Daily Californian* | 10.20.2021

Obasogie, a professor of law and bioethics at UC Berkeley, was recognized with one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine. "It's an honor that is very much deserved, and a recognition of Dr. Obasogie's intellectually important and societally significant contributions," said CGS' Marcy Darnovsky.

WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION |
EUGENICS | GENOMICS | VARIOUS

GENOME EDITING

Mythmakers in the Market for Perfection

Sheila Jasanoff, *American Scientist* | Nov–Dec 2021

This review of *The Code Breaker* and *CRISPR People* notes, "To probe CRISPR's threats and promises for humanity, we need more than celebratory tales of brave new worlds. We need deeper explorations of two questions: 'Whose knowledge counts?' and 'Toward what ends should that knowledge guide us?'"

How Silicon Valley hatched a plan to turn blood into human eggs

Antonio Regalado, *MIT Tech Review* | 10.28.2021

New startups aim to break the rules of reproduction as we know them and supercharge the path to designer babies by manufacturing artificial human eggs.

No, scientists are not any closer to pig-to-human transplants than they were last week

Jason Mast, *Endpoints News* | 10.22.2021

Steve Holtzman published the results of a similar experiment in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1994. He calls the latest furore "hype and bullshit [that] belongs in the *National Enquirer*." Other experts have more moderate comments, but most agree that the research is far from ready for medical applications.

In a First, Surgeons Attached a Pig Kidney to a Human, and It Worked

[Roni Caryn Rabin](#), *The New York Times* | 10.19.2021

Surgeons in New York have successfully attached a kidney grown in a genetically altered pig to a human patient and found that the organ worked normally. This scientific breakthrough one day may yield a new supply of organs for transplants.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Inside Nigeria's unregulated human egg industry

[Mariam Adetona](#), *Al Jazeera* | 10.17.2021

In the booming Nigerian fertility business, young women face unfavorable conditions and undergo multiple egg donations at the risk of their health. A 2012 bill to establish a Nigerian Assisted Reproduction Authority to regulate this practice has not yet been passed into law.

The Children of Sperm Donors Want to Change the Rules of Conception

[Sarah Zhang](#), *The Atlantic* | 10.15.2021

Does everyone have a right to know their biological parents? Some donor-conceived people have been disturbed to find that they have dozens of half siblings from the same donor, that doctors have secretly impregnated patients with their own sperm, or that donors have lied about themselves to sperm banks—all at least partially because donation was anonymous.

Cracking the Egg Donation Market

[Katherine McKeen](#), *The Regulatory Review* | 10.13.2021

The United States has no federal regulations that address advertising to potential egg donors. No agency tracks the long-term health effects of egg donation. And there is little oversight of the egg harvesting process process.

EUGENICS

California's shameful history of forced sterilization

[Editorial Board](#), *The Press Democrat* | 10.24.2021

Staff Writer Phil Barber's [startling account \(paywalled\)](#) of thousands of forced sterilizations at the Sonoma Developmental Center documents a brutal chapter in California history. Just this year, California finally agreed to offer compensation to survivors, making it the third state to do so. Eugenics was routine and accepted not so long ago, in California and elsewhere. Telling the victims' stories, as Barber has done for some people here in Sonoma County, might help ensure that colossal wrong never happens again.

COVID-19 and the rebiologisation of racial difference

[Wingel Xue and Alexandre White](#), *The Lancet* | 10.23.2021

Current data show wide racial disparities in the burden of COVID-19 in nations with histories of structural racism. In the US, Latino, Indigenous, and Black people are disproportionately affected. The initial impulse in some quarters in early 2020 to attribute disparities to biological difference conferred by racial typology highlights the enduring power of race-thinking.

Vermont's legislative leaders apologize for state-sanctioned eugenics movement

[Rachel Nostrant](#), *VTDigger* | 10.18.2021

"For those that were directly impacted or their descendants, and for all of the communities involved, we cannot undo the trauma that this moment has caused, but we can start by formally acknowledging this dark period in our state's history," said Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski.

Ghosting the Confederacy

[Erin L. Thompson](#), *Harper's Bazaar* | 10.18.2021

In Charlottesville, a statue of Robert E. Lee was a focal point of violence during a 2017 white supremacist riot. Now, the city must decide what to do with such Confederate monuments. This week an African American heritage organization in Charlottesville proposed one definitive answer: melt them down.

GENOMICS

Inside the lawsuit that ended US gene patenting

[Heidi Ledford](#), *Nature* | 10.25.2021

The Genome Defense: Inside the Epic Legal Battle to Determine Who Owns Your DNA tells the story of a Supreme Court ruling that challenged a linchpin of the emerging genetic-testing industry. The story stands as a guide to the forces that shape an increasingly important industry — and to the vexed influence of patents.

States Are Toughening Up Privacy Laws for At-Home DNA Tests

[Emily Mullin](#), *Wired* | 10.21.2021

In the US, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act protects individuals' privacy for doctor-ordered genetic tests but not those bought from companies like 23andMe, which are not considered medical. The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act has many loopholes as well. California's Genetic Information Privacy Act is the latest to tighten regulations on this sensitive data.

Ancient-DNA Researchers Set Ethics Guidelines for Their Work

[Sabrina Imbler](#), *The New York Times* | 10.20.2021

An international group of researchers working with ancient DNA proposed a set of general guidelines for their work, including engagement with all stakeholders before starting any study. Some scientists support the new guidelines, but critics — many of them Indigenous — question why the group excluded numerous researchers who have worked extensively on ethics and community engagement.

The most common Alzheimer's risk gene may also protect against memory loss

[Jocelyn Kaiser](#), *Science* | 10.07.2021

A common genetic variant called APOE4 raises a person's risk of Alzheimer's disease. A new study finds that, surprisingly, the APOE4 variant also has positive cognitive impacts.

VARIOUS

“Science and Technology Now Sit in the Center of Every Policy and Social Issue”

[Alondra Nelson and William Kearney](#), *Issues in Science and Technology* | 10.19.2021

Editor William Karney interviews Alondra Nelson, deputy director for science and society in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, about “a new social compact for science and technology policy” that would make innovation more inclusive and equitable, reckon with the nation's past, and use social science to improve policy making.

Before making a mammoth, ask the public

[Victoria Herridge](#), *Nature* | 10.20.2021

Reshaping the planet shouldn't be left to a chosen few, with insider advice from hand-picked experts. Instead, Colossal, and all companies like it, should do something as radical for business as its plans are for the planet: actively involve the public in its research decisions.



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