



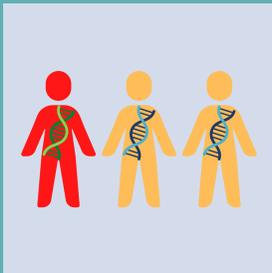
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BioPolitical

News&Views

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SPOTLIGHT



Eugenics is Back: In a range of new flavors

Anne Rumberger and Marcy Darnovsky, *Science for the People* | 02.29.2024

Anti-abortion forces manipulate eugenic ideas and profess concern about racial equity in order to further their agenda. Meanwhile, among the Silicon Valley techno-libertarian elite, some embrace new reproductive technologies to engineer genetically superior children.

COMMENTARY



Hunting Cloned Sheep and Other Post-Modern Biotech Absurdities

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 03.19.2024

A Montana entrepreneur was convicted for creating hybrid sheep from a cloned endangered animal, and scientists at Colossal Biosciences made progress toward a hybrid “designer elephant.” Rich people continue to seek immortality and anticipate the singularity.



Germline Editing: Made in Germany?

[Isabelle Bartram](#), Guest Contributor, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.13.2024

Researchers are advocating for overturning Germany’s law prohibiting embryo research, some so that they can pursue heritable genome editing research. The law is grounded in “pro-life” arguments, but German feminists point to a range of concerns about the social consequences of overturning it.

Can 23andMe Survive?

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 03.07.2024



After a severe data breach and a series of PR missteps in response, 23andMe is struggling. Will this crisis bring the direct-to-consumer genetic testing company—and its practices of selling consumers’ genetic data—to an end?

WHAT WE'RE READING

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

GENE EDITING

CRISPR Gene Drives and the Future of Evolution

[Hannah Thomasy](#), *The Scientist* | 03.15.2024

Genetic engineering pioneer Kevin Esvelt’s work highlights biotechnology’s immense potential for good—but also for catastrophe.

Engineering the Microbiome: CRISPR Leads the Way

[Mariella Bodemeier Loayza Careaga](#), *The Scientist* | 03.15.2024

Researchers are using CRISPR to genetically engineer microbes, but scientific understanding of microbes’ genomes and their role in human health is still in its infancy.

CRISPR Will Likely Not Solve Bird Flu

[Carol Cardona and Michelle Kromm](#), *Scientific American* | 03.11.2024

Using CRISPR to try to make chickens more resistant to bird flu carries several risks, including encouraging viral mutations that make avian flu more deadly.

Meet the fetal surgeon forging CRISPR’s next frontier: curing diseases in the womb

[Megan Molteni](#), *STAT* | 02.21.2024

Fetal surgeon Tippi MacKenzie is working to establish fetal gene therapies that use CRISPR to stop a genetic disease before it really starts. Ensuring that no heritable gene edits are made in the process is a crucial part of the process.

EUGENICS

We Keep Our Data Safe

[Juliet Kunkel](#), *yes!* | 03.04.2024

New technologies aren’t simply neutral tools; they’re created by and for existing power structures. When they’re used to criminalize, coerce labor, and extract profit, can they be repurposed or should they be dismantled?

“Ridding the Race of His Defective Blood”—Eugenics in the Journal, 1906–1948

[Paul A. Lombardo](#), *The New England Journal of Medicine* | 03.02.2024

William Mayo, for whom the Mayo Clinic is named, embraced eugenic ideals and advocated for forced sterilization programs and other eugenic practices. He was one of many prominent advocates of eugenics featured in the NEJM in the 20th century.

GENOMICS

DNA Tests Are Uncovering the True Prevalence of Incest

[Sarah Zhang](#), *The Atlantic* | 03.18.2024

People are discovering the truth about their biological parents with DNA—and learning that incest is far more common than many think.

'All of Us' research project diversifies the storehouse of genetic knowledge

[Rob Stein](#), *NPR* | 03.07.2024

A federal project that aims to diversify genetic data collected from Americans may encourage the misleading idea that genetics are a major factor in health disparities, and more dangerously, bolster one of the false tenets of scientific racism.

'All of Us' genetics chart stirs unease over controversial depiction of race

[Max Kozlov](#), *Nature* | 02.23.2024

Some geneticists have expressed their unease about a figure in a recently published *Nature* paper because it could be misinterpreted as supporting genetic essentialism — the pseudoscientific belief that racial or ethnic groups are distinct genetic categories.

Humane genomics education can reduce racism

[Brian M. Donovan et al.](#), *Science* | 02.22.2024

Most US high school students aren't exposed to information that explicitly counters essentialist views about race. At best, instruction fails to challenge genetic essentialist beliefs; at worst, it could unintentionally lead students to construct them.

GENE THERAPY

There is a new most expensive drug in the world. Price tag: \$4.25 million

[Antonio Regalado](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 03.20.2024

Orchard Therapeutics' newly approved gene therapy has saved the lives of children with metachromatic leukodystrophy. But does the sky-high price mean that the treatment isn't economically sustainable?

New way for states to cover pricey gene therapies will start with sickle cell disease

[Nada Hassanein](#), *New Jersey Monitor* | 03.14.2024

A new federal program seeks to make gene therapies for sickle cell disease, and eventually other gene therapies, available to low-income patients by negotiating discount agreements between the manufacturer and state Medicaid agencies.

Sickle Cell Patients Face a Tough Choice: Be Cured or Have Kids

[Gerry Smith](#), *Bloomberg* | 03.12.2024

Patients who undergo gene therapies for sickle cell disease must take a toxic drug that can leave them infertile. A parent of a child with sickle cell disease commented, "It's a potential cure for a lifelong illness that he has. But at what cost?"

Doctors Can Now Edit the Genes Inside Your Body

[Betsy McKay](#), *The Wall Street Journal* | 03.11.2024

Experimental "in vivo" gene editing therapies, which edit cells inside a person's body, may be cheaper and less invasive. They could reach more patients with cardiovascular and other diseases, but there are remaining risks and unknowns.

A new strategy to cure disease in a single day, and forever: epigenetic silencing

[Manuel Ansedè](#), *El País* | 03.01.2024

A team of Italian researchers have silenced a gene associated with high cholesterol levels, making epigenetic changes rather than editing DNA.

Egg freezing patients ‘mised’ by clinics

[Anna Collinson, Maryam Ahmed and Bella McShane](#), *BBC* | 03.12.2024

BBC analysis found that 41% of private clinics offering egg freezing services in the UK did not make clear in their advertising materials the relatively low chances of success for using those frozen eggs to have a child in the future.

Scientists move step closer to making IVF eggs from skin cells

[Ian Sample](#), *The Guardian* | 03.08.2024

The radical procedure, a version of the cloning technique used to make Dolly the sheep, has only been tried with mice. It involves merging the nucleus from a skin cell with an egg that has had its nucleus removed.

Alabama IVF ruling draws attention to technology’s unregulated frontiers

[Daniel Gilbert](#), *The Washington Post* | 03.07.2024

Critiques of the Alabama ruling underscored widespread support for IVF, but also renewed debates about more controversial practices within assisted reproduction that remain unregulated in the U.S., such as embryo selection based on sex or genetic screenings.

Alabama governor signs IVF bill giving immunity to patients and providers

[Liz Baker, Debbie Elliott, and Susanna Capelouto](#), *NPR* | 03.06.2024

In response to public outrage, Alabama state lawmakers passed legislation that will allow patients and clinics to restart IVF treatments immediately without fear of legal repercussions if embryos are damaged or destroyed. But the stop-gap law does not address many of the issues posed by the ruling.

The massive legal fallout from Alabama’s IVF ruling is just the beginning

[Mary Ziegler, Naomi Cahn, and Sonia Suter](#), *MSNBC News* | 02.22.2024

The fallout from the Alabama decision will likely be felt well beyond its borders. It opens up new civil and criminal liabilities of all kinds—individuals who discard their embryos or donate them to research could risk facing liability for wrongful deaths.

Accidents, Lax Rules and Abortion Laws Now Imperil Fertility Industry

[Azeen Ghorayshi and Sarah Kliff](#), *The New York Times* | 02.22.2024

Fertility clinics’ pattern of errors in storing and preserving embryos has taken on new gravity as the anti-abortion movement aims to extend “personhood” to IVF embryos, arguing to an increasingly polarized judiciary that they are “unborn children.”

The Beginning of a Bad TRIP – Alabama’s Embryonic Personhood Decision and Targeted Restrictions on IVF Provision

[Katherine L. Kraschel](#), *Bill of Health* | 02.21.2024

Targeted restrictions on IVF Provision, or TRIP laws, will rob patients of their ability to build their families, will exacerbate long standing racial disparities in accessing fertility care, and will disproportionately impact the LGBTQ+ community.

SURROGACY360



International Approaches to Surrogacy Regulation

[Julia Englebert, Carson Turner, and Narintohn Luangrath](#), *The Regulatory Review* | 03.02.2024

In the absence of an international legal framework, country-specific legislation on surrogacy spans a spectrum. This article summarizes a range of perspectives on the benefits and risks of surrogacy and features

VARIOUS

U.S. Must Move ‘Decisively’ to Avert ‘Extinction-Level’ Threat From AI, Government-Commissioned Report Says

Billy Perrigo, *Time* | 03.11.2024

A report on A.I. commissioned by the U.S. State Department warns that the country needs to move “quickly and decisively” to address national security risks and recommends several policies to regulate AI.

A.I. Is Learning What It Means to Be Alive

Carl Zimmer, *The New York Times* | 03.10.2024

Scientists report that A.I. models fed large amounts of biological data are making novel discoveries in gene and cell development, but they also raise privacy and security risks, including the prospect of new bioweapons.

War zone or not, Ukraine seeks to reclaim its role as a hub for clinical trials

Andrew Joseph, *STAT* | 02.22.2024

Despite the ongoing war, Ukrainian researchers and executives are increasingly urging companies to restart clinical trials, insisting the advantages that lured drugmakers in the first place still make the country a desirable one in which to run studies.

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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