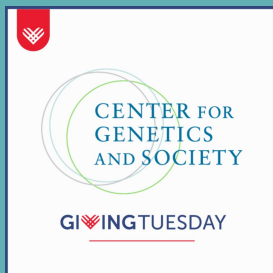


BioPolitical

News&Views

November 26, 2024

SPOTLIGHT



Giving Tuesday is next week - Dec 3!

With your support, the Center for Genetics and Society is leading the way in confronting the cutting-edge challenges posed by reproductive and genetic technologies. As attacks mount on social justice, human rights, and democracy, your contribution helps us ramp up our work to secure a just and inclusive future where human biotechnologies serve the common good.

Please donate today!

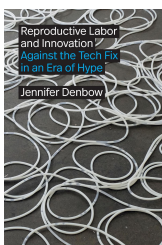
COMMENTARY



South Africa Does Not Allow Heritable Human Genome Editing

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 11.24.2024

A handful of South African academics championed the claim that creating genetically modified children is now permitted there. After alerts from CGS and others about their misleading effort, the Chair of South Africa's National Health Research Ethics Council confirmed that heritable human genome editing is prohibited.



Neoliberalism's Love Affair with Innovation

Emma McDonald Kennedy, *Biopolitical Times* | 11.24.2024

A new book by Jennifer Denbow unmasks the neoliberal myth that innovations inevitably advance social good. Her work helps demonstrate why social justice perspectives are crucial to push back on unfettered development and commercialization of reproductive and genetic technologies.

CGS IN THE NEWS



Ethics changes notwithstanding, creating genetically modified babies is still illegal in SA

[Tamsin Metelerkamp](#), *Daily Maverick* | 11.18.2024

South Africa's National Health Research Ethics Council has confirmed that heritable human genome editing remains illegal.



Opening the Door to 'Designer Babies'? South Africa's Genome Editing Guidelines Spark Global Debate

[Bernice Lottering](#), *Gene Online* | 11.08.2024

A recent change in South Africa's health research ethics guidelines introduces language that could pave the way for heritable human genome editing. Scientists, researchers and advocates have raised concerns about the change—see the [recent piece](#) in *The Conversation* co-authored by Françoise Baylis and CGS' Katie Hasson.

WHAT WE'RE READING

GENE EDITING | GENOMICS | EUGENICS & US POLITICS
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | SURROGACY360 | VARIOUS

GENE EDITING

The Legal and Ethical Debate on Human Heritable Genome Editing (HHGE) in South Africa

[Jantina de Vries](#), *EthicsLab* | 11.15.2024

Lawyers at a South African university are advocating for a contested interpretation of South African law that opens the door to heritable genome editing. Their scholarship ignores ethical concerns with the practice and pushes a false narrative of public acceptance.

Ethics Washing: The Misappropriation of Ubuntu in the Ethics of Heritable Human Genome Editing (HHGE)

[Anye Nyamnjoh](#), *EthicsLab* | 11.15.2024

Invoking the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu to advocate for equal access to heritable human genome editing exemplifies "ethics washing"—the use of superficial ethical language to legitimize an agenda without substantive engagement.

Sickle cell patient dies in Beam study of base editing therapy

[Ned Pagliarulo](#), *BioPharmaDive* | 11.05.2024

Beam Therapeutics' gene therapy uses base editing to treat sickle cell disease. A patient died in the clinical trial of the experimental treatment due to lung damage from a chemotherapy drug used alongside the gene therapy.

GENOMICS

WHO releases new principles for ethical human genomic data collection and sharing

World Health Organization | 11.20.2024

The World Health Organization has issued a set of principles to guide the use of human genomic data globally. The document emphasizes informed consent, privacy, equity, international collaboration, and capacity building.

UN puts AI Titans on the hook for billions of dollars of biopiracy payments.

[Jim Thomas](#), *Scan the Horizon* | 11.19.2024

In a recent decision, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity said companies who have profited from the DNA of indigenous peoples and local communities should pay into a fund to compensate them.

The decision also has implications for AI in genomics.

Genomic research is at risk from ‘race science’ activists’ discredited ideas

Bill Newman and Demetra Georgiou, *The Guardian* | 11.03.2024

“As organisations representing leading researchers and clinicians working in human genetics, we can state unequivocally that race is a fluid social, historical and political construct with no biological or genetic basis.”

Class action lawsuits against genetic testing companies over PGT-A

Ruth Retassie, *PET* | 10.21.2024

Patients have filed class action lawsuits against genetic testing companies to recuperate funds they spent on preimplantation genetic testing for aneuploidy (PGT-A). The lawsuits allege that the companies did not disclose that PGT-A is unproven and carries risks.

EUGENICS & US POLITICS

He has already fathered many children. Now Musk wants all of the US to embrace extreme breeding

Arwa Mahdawi, *The Guardian* | 11.19.2024

Trump’s billionaire best friend, Elon Musk, wants young people to ‘fear’ childlessness. He’ll be right at home in an incoming administration set on rolling back reproductive rights.

Elon Musk Has Always Been Like This. So Has Silicon Valley.

Colette Shade, *The New Republic* | 11.14.2024

Some have seen Elon Musk’s increasing closeness with Trump as a sign of a new “Dark MAGA Elon” identity, but a look back at Silicon Valley’s past ties to conservative politics suggests there is more consistency under the surface than there might appear.

Mass production of genetically selected humans: inside a Pennsylvania pronatalist candidate’s fantasy city-state

Stephanie Kirchgaessner and Hannah Devlin, *The Guardian* | 11.03.2024

An undercover investigation reveals a pronatalist agenda designed to transform the current socioeconomic elite into a future biological elite—in part by forging an alliance between the “new right” and Silicon Valley.

Beyond IVF: Eugenics and Reproductive Biotechnology

Jennifer Denbow, *Nursing Clio* | 10.31.2024

The current political debate over IVF access versus restriction misses important links between reproductive genetic technologies, the companies that promote them for financial gain, and legacies of eugenic thinking.

The Dangerous Resurgence of “Bad Genes” Language

Susan A. Nolan and Michael Kimball, *Psychology Today* | 10.30.2024

Scientists who support eugenics and race science hide behind “academic freedom” to publish their work. Authoritarian leaders then use their writing to justify discriminatory and White supremacist policies.

Google, Microsoft, and Perplexity Are Promoting Scientific Racism in Search Results

David Gilbert, *Wired* | 10.24.2024

AI-infused search engines from Google, Microsoft, and Perplexity have been surfacing deeply racist and widely debunked research promoting race science, which echoes eugenic myths that white people are genetically superior to nonwhite people.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

Emboldened anti-abortion groups create wishlist for second Trump term

Carter Sherman, *The Guardian* | 11.17.2024

As Donald Trump prepares to return to the White House with both the House and the Senate in Republican control, anti-abortion groups are proposing their “wishlist” of federal policies that would curtail or eliminate abortion access and IVF.

Fertility agencies accused of promoting eugenics with embryo selection

[Ewan Bolton](#), *The Telegraph* | 11.12.2024

Fertility clinics in the U.S. that offer embryo selection in the IVF process have been accused of promoting eugenics and misleading consumers about the accuracy of the techniques.

Book Review: Biomedical Innovation in Fertility Care – Evidence challenges, commercialisation and the market for hope

[Zeenat Beebeejaun](#), *PET* | 10.28.2024

A new book, *Biomedical Innovation in Fertility Care*, unveils the inadequate regulation that enables for-profit fertility clinics to take advantage of patients’ hopes to sell them experimental add-ons to fertility treatments.

SURROGACY 360



Cambodia cracks down on illegal international surrogacy as demand remains high

[Oman Al Yahyai](#), *EuroNews* | 10.24.2024

The arrest of 13 Filipina women in Cambodia sheds light on how women with limited economic opportunities are recruited to work as surrogates, which makes them vulnerable to arrest in countries that have banned surrogacy under human trafficking laws.

VARIOUS

The Horrors of Hepatitis Research

[Carl Elliott](#), *The New York Review of Books* | 11.21.2024

Between 1956 and 1972, researchers deliberately infected institutionalized, mentally disabled children at the Willowbrook State School with hepatitis. A new book reveals how these horrors were part of a larger set of unjust studies in hepatitis research.

Kennedy’s F.D.A. Wish List: Raw Milk, Stem Cells, Heavy Metals

[Christina Jewett](#), *The New York Times* | 11.12.2024

Donald Trump seems poised to empower Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to shape FDA policies and priorities, including undermining the agency’s oversight of experimental treatments that pose health risks, such as stem cell treatments.

What Trump’s election win could mean for AI, climate and health

[Jeff Tollefson](#), [Max Kozlov](#), [Mariana Lenharo](#) and [Traci Watson](#), *Nature* | 11.08.2024

Donald Trump’s second term may bring significant setbacks in policies related to artificial intelligence, climate change and clean energy, public health, and foreign science partnerships.

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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