

The Gut-Brain Connection

In this podcast, digital managing editor Robert Frederick reviews research by Duke University's Diego Bohórquez showing that your sensory experience of food doesn't end when you swallow.

<http://bit.ly/2FD5avH>

Scientists in Survival Mode

After Hurricanes Irma and Maria hit in the fall of 2017, local scientists in the storms' pathways wanted to be out collecting data on the resulting environmental impacts to inform restoration, but instead they have been "in survival mode" for months. This slideshow presents an expanded set of visuals from researchers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and builds on their experiences reported in *Spotlight* in the March–April issue.

<http://bit.ly/2p6SFly>

Scientific Talks with a Soundtrack

This podcast covers what happens when a zoologist and composer combine efforts to spice up a scientific presentation.

<http://bit.ly/2IUAnw3>



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will be the unending stream of affluent customers and the businesses profiting by supplying them with the enhanced children that they want.

A genetic-enhancement industry will be unlike any other. Even if the practice is banned in the United States, the government won't restrict the importation of genetically enhanced children produced elsewhere for U.S. citizen parents, no matter what technology is used, and I doubt that the United States will have the political will to prevent its citizens from traveling to that lightly regulated jurisdiction.

Dale R. Worley
Waltham, MA

Dr. Nisbet responds:

Despite Mr. Worley's imagined outcomes, early and sustained public dialogue and input are essential to the development and governance of gene-editing applications for a number of reasons. First, most research in the area is either directly or indirectly financed

by tax-supported government funding. It is therefore essential to maintain public confidence in the ability of scientists to make wise and ethical decisions about research; otherwise, funding is likely to be limited, or research directions restricted by regulation. Because most research is publicly financed, it is also necessary to consult the public regarding what they believe to be morally and ethically acceptable. Second, once applications are introduced to the market, public acceptance of those applications is not guaranteed, as has been the case in the debate over genetically modified food. Early and sustained public consultation is the only strategy that can help bolster public confidence and acceptance in specific applications once they are available to patients and consumers. Overall, public dialogue is likely to promote a more careful and egalitarian implementation of gene editing, while also avoiding the polarization and pushback that have come to characterize debates about genetic modification.

Learning From Failed Tech

To the Editors:

In "Will the Museum of Failure Succeed?" (*Engineering*, January–February), Henry Petroski points out missteps in the design and development process that museums tend not to highlight. In addition, technology can later "fail" or require trade-offs due to unintended impacts. Corporate sponsors may be reluctant to acknowledge this "double-edged sword" aspect of technology.

An early counterexample was the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities-funded exhibition "Technology: Chance or Choice?," which opened in 1983 on the 50th anniversary of Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. It identified technologies during that half century that had significant personal or societal influence—both positive and negative—such as nuclear energy, plastics, and automation. Visitors grappled with critical issues raised by various technologies, selecting a quotation for each that was either positive, neutral, or negative and seeing the choices made by others. As Matthew Nisbet explains in the same issue ("The Gene-Editing Conversation"), it is even more important today for scientists (and engineers) to engage the public in meaningful dialogue about the potential consequences of new technologies.

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Erratum

In "The Secret History of Gravitational Waves" (March–April) by Tony Rothman, the text on page 103 should have said that the strongest gravitational disturbance yet detected happened in 2016. We have corrected the error online.

How to Write to American Scientist

Brief letters commenting on articles appearing in the magazine are welcomed. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions. Please include an email address if possible. Address: Letters to the Editors, P.O. Box 13975, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 or editors@amsconline.org.