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Telemedicine for abortion pills is healthy and safe, says study.



Supporters of telemedicine for medication abortions have been heartened by a study published in the leading journal *Nature Medicine*. The researchers, from the University of California, San Francisco, collected data on 6,034 telehealth medication abortions. They found that it "is effective, safe and comparable to published rates of in-person medication abortion care". The article, which comes out of the same abortion research powerhouse which was responsible for the influential Turnaway Study, could influence the Supreme Court when it hears a case brought by opponents of medication abortion next month. They claim that telemedicine is unsafe.

[Read the entire article...](#)

Ecuador's high court legalizes euthanasia.

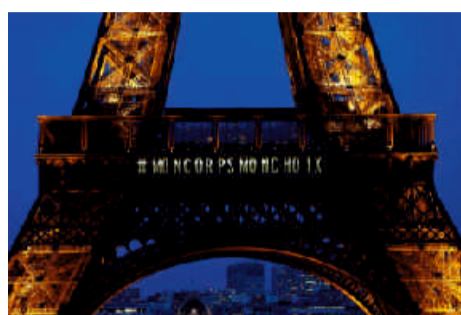


Ecuador has become the third country in Latin America to permit euthanasia and assisted suicide. Last week its Constitutional Court decreed by a vote of 7 to 2 that the National Assembly should approve a law regulating the procedure within a year. The decision was made after a 42-year-old woman with ALS, Paola Roldán, sued to have her right to euthanasia recognised. Her lawyers say that she can elect to be euthanised whenever she wants.

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France becomes world's first country to enshrine abortion rights in constitution

France became the world's first country to enshrine abortion rights in its constitution on Monday, the culmination of an effort that began in direct response to the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Lawmakers from both houses of the French Parliament voted 780 to 72 in favor of the measure, easily clearing the three-fifths majority needed to amend the French constitution. Monday's vote, held during a special gathering of lawmakers at the Palace of Versailles, southwest of Paris, was the final step in the legislative process. The French Senate and National Assembly each overwhelmingly approved the amendment earlier this year.

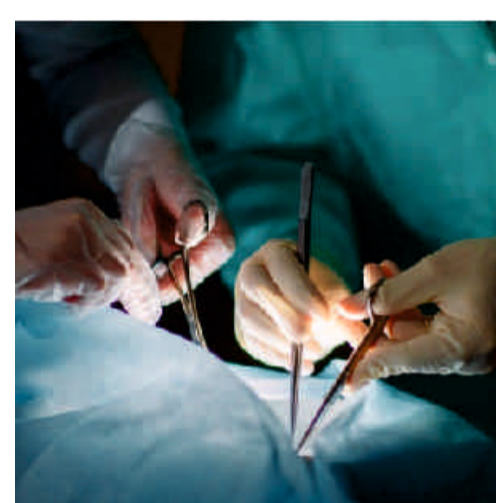


The amendment states that there is a "guaranteed freedom" to abortion in France. Some groups and lawmakers had called for stronger language to explicitly call abortion a "right." Lawmakers hailed the move as a history-making way for France to send a clear signal of support on reproductive rights, with abortion under threat in the United States, as well as in parts of Europe, like Hungary, where far-right parties have come to power. Following the vote, the Eiffel Tower was lit up with the words "my body my choice."

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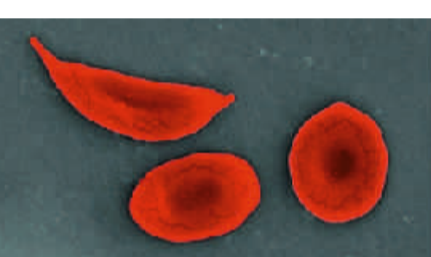
First pig kidney transplant in a person: what it means for the future

Early success in the first transplant of a pig kidney into a living person has raised researchers' hopes for larger clinical trials involving pig organs. Such trials could bring 'xenotransplantation', the use of animal organs in human recipients, into the clinic. The recipient of the pig kidney was a 62-year-old man with end-stage renal failure named Richard Slayman. He is recovering well after his surgery on 16 March, according to his transplant surgeon. The kidney was taken from a miniature pig carrying a record 69 genomic edits, which were aimed at preventing rejection of the donated organ and reducing the risk that a virus lurking in the organ could infect the recipient.



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The first CRISPR therapy approved in the U.S. will treat sickle cell disease



U.S. patients with sickle cell disease now have a novel treatment option: the first-ever CRISPR-based therapy.

On December 8 of 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the gene-editing therapy for use in patients age 12 years and older. In addition to offering hope of relief for people with severe forms of the painful blood disorder, the treatment, called Casgevy, is the world's first to genetically tweak cells using the Nobel Prize-winning molecular scissors CRISPR/Cas9.

Another gene therapy for sickle cell disease, called Lyfgenia and developed by biotech company bluebird bio, based in Somerville, Mass., was also approved December 8 of 2023.

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Big companies, like Nestlé, are funding health research in South Africa - why this is wrong



In 2021, the director of the African Research University Alliance Centre of Excellence in Food Security at the University of Pretoria was appointed to the board of the transnational food corporation Nestlé. At the time a group of more than 200 senior academics wrote an open letter, about conflicts of interest. Nestlé's portfolio of foods, by its own admission, includes more than 60% that don't meet the definition of healthy products.

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JUDGMENTS & DECISIONS

Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

1. Disclosure of the identities and medical data of prostitutes diagnosed with HIV was a breach of their right to private life

O.G. and Others v. Greece (applications nos. 71555/12 and 48256/13) [January 2024]

The case of *O.G. and Others v. Greece* (applications nos. 71555/12 and 48256/13) concerned the publication, by decision of the domestic authorities, of medical data concerning prostitutes who had been diagnosed as HIV-positive, and media coverage of them. It also concerned the circumstances in which they were required to undergo a blood test. In Chamber judgment¹ in this case the European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been two violations: a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private life) of the European Convention on Human Rights, with regard to two applicants, on account of the blood tests they had been required to undertake. The Court considered that the blood samples imposed on two applicants had amounted to an interference with their private life and noted that this had not been in accordance with the law within the meaning of Article 8 of the Convention, given that the provisions of domestic law in issue ought to have been foreseeable with regard to their effects for the applicants. In particular, the Court noted that none of the provisions cited by the Government had been capable of justifying a medical intervention, whether carried out by police officers or doctors, such as that imposed on the applicants concerned. - a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private life) of the European Convention with regard to four applicants, on account of the publication of data concerning them. The Court considered that the publication of the four applicants' data had amounted to a disproportionate interference with their right to respect for private life. These applicants' names and photographs and the information that they were HIV-positive, had been downloaded to the police department's website and broadcast by the media, and the prosecutor had not attempted to establish whether other measures, capable of ensuring less media exposure of the applicants, could have been taken in their cases. Lastly, the Court decided to strike parts of the applications out of its list where they concerned five applicants, four of whom had died. It also dismissed the complaints of certain applicants as being out of time or for non-exhaustion of domestic remedies.

2. Woman forced to travel abroad to have an abortion following legislative amendments in Poland breached the Convention

M.L. v. Poland (application no. 40119/21) December 2023

In Chamber judgment¹ in the case of *M.L. v. Poland* (application no. 40119/21) concerning restrictions on abortion rights the European Court of Human Rights held, by five votes to two, that there had been: a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The applicant alleged in particular that she had been banned from having access to a legal abortion in the case of foetal abnormalities, following a 2020 Constitutional Court judgment. She had become pregnant and the foetus was diagnosed with trisomy 21. A scheduled hospital abortion had been cancelled when the legislative amendments resulting from the Constitutional Court ruling had come into force. Unable to have an abortion in Poland, she had ultimately had to travel to a private clinic abroad for the procedure. The Court found that the legislative amendments in question, which had forced her to travel abroad for an abortion at considerable expense and away from her family support network, had to have had a significant psychological impact on her. Such interference with her rights, and in particular with a medical procedure for which she had qualified and which had already been put in motion, had created a situation which had deprived her of proper safeguards against arbitrariness. Moreover, the composition of the Constitutional Court that had issued the ruling impacting the applicant's rights had included judges who had been appointed in a procedure tainted by serious irregularities (see the Court's previous judgment of 2021 *Xero Flor v. Poland*). In parallel, the Court has today unanimously declared inadmissible a case involving 927 women of child-bearing age who alleged that they were potential victims of a violation of their rights as the amendments to the law now forced them to carry pregnancies to term even in the case of foetal abnormality. As in the leading case *A.M. and Others v. Poland*, the Court found that these applicants had failed to provide any evidence proving that they had been at real risk of being directly affected by the legislative amendments. They could not therefore arguably claim to be "victims" within the meaning of the European Convention. This decision, *M.B. v. Poland* (no. 3030/21) and 926 other applications, is final.

3. An association's application concerning anti-Covid measures banning public events in Switzerland in 2020 is inadmissible

Communauté genevoise d'action syndicale (CGAS) v. Switzerland (application no. 21881/20) November 2023

The case of *Communauté genevoise d'action syndicale (CGAS) v. Switzerland* (application no. 21881/20) concerned measures in force from 17 March to 30 May 2020, which were adopted by the Swiss Government to counter the coronavirus 2019 disease ("COVID-19"). Relying on Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the Convention, the applicant association complained about the blanket ban on public events which had resulted from "Ordinance COVID-19 no. 2", in the version in force during the above-mentioned period. In Grand Chamber judgment¹ the European Court of Human Rights held that the application was inadmissible within the meaning of Article 35 of the Convention. - Unanimously, the Court considered that the complaint concerning trade-union freedom fell outside the scope of the case as submitted to the Grand Chamber and that, in any event, it was inadmissible for failure to comply with the six-month deadline (Article 35 of the Convention as in force at the relevant time). This new complaint had been raised for the first time in the context of the proceedings before the Grand Chamber; it ought to have been lodged, at the latest, within six months of 30 May 2020, the date on which Ordinance COVID-19 no. 2 had ceased to apply. - By a majority (12 votes to 5), the Court considered that the complaint concerning freedom of peaceful assembly was inadmissible for failure to exhaust the domestic remedies. The Court noted that the applicant association had failed to take appropriate steps to enable the national courts to fulfil their fundamental role in the Convention protection system. The Court stated, in particular, that an application for a preliminary ruling on constitutionality, lodged in the context of an ordinary appeal against a decision implementing federal ordinances, was a remedy which was directly accessible to litigants and made it possible, where appropriate, to have the impugned provision declared unconstitutional. There had been no particular circumstance which would have released the applicant association from the obligation to exhaust the above remedy. Reiterating its subsidiary role, the Court specified that, in the unprecedented and highly sensitive context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was all the more important that the national authorities had first been given the opportunity to strike a balance between competing private and public interests or between different rights protected by the Convention, taking into consideration local needs and conditions and the public-health situation as it had existed at the relevant time.

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SUMMER SCHOOL 2024: VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

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The Laboratory for the Research of Medical Law and Bioethics of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) announces the organization of the 9th International Summer School of Medical Law and Bioethics on: "VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN HEALTHCARE". The Summer School will be conducted in English, by faculty members and doctoral students from AUTH and from other universities in Greece and abroad, as well as by specialised jurists and doctors. The Summer School will take place between the 30th June and the 5th of July 2024

and it may be joined by jurists, health professionals and students of all levels (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral ones). The lectures will take place online and onsite.

The tuition fees amount to EUR 100.00 for students of all levels and EUR 150.00 for jurists and health professionals for entries up to April 30th, 2024 and to EUR 130.00 and EUR 180.00 respectively for entries up to May 31st, 2024 (deadline).

These fees do not include accommodation and food expenses, as well as participation in any parallel activities.

On the completion of the programme, participants will receive a certificate with ECTS credits. The application form is available at the link: <https://kedivim.auth.gr/en/programs/medical-law-9-en/> with the relevant submission instructions.

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