



Did Eugenics Rest on an Elementary Mistake?

Lessons from History for Today's Medical Genetics

Mental deficiency was the target of eugenicists early last century. They took action to segregate or sterilize affected individuals. But, apparently, they made an astoundingly simple mistake: a basic understanding of genetics seemingly suggests that this approach could never be successful.



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Hamish Spencer is Professor of Zoology at the University of Otago in Dunedin and Director of the Allan Wilson Centre, one of the New Zealand government's Centres of Research Excellence. Hamish studied for his undergraduate and masters degrees at Auckland University before obtaining a PhD from Harvard University in 1988. He is an evolutionary biologist with wide interests ranging from the use of evolutionary trees to discover how various groups of organisms (e.g., molluscs and birds) have evolved, to mathematical genetics and the history of genetics.



ALLAN WILSON CENTRE

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