

Hephaestus Genetics

Hephaestus were the main research group involved in developing a real application for the understanding of the human genome. Set up in the late teens they were in the forefront of curing cancer in the late twenties. They also had research lines in curing a number of hereditary diseases and in improving human fertility.

Hephaestus was a privately funded medical research company that developed genetic therapies to help cure a range of diseases caused by genes, or at least remove the genetic susceptibility for them. Many people benefited from these treatments. Although few of those that did probably realised that it was Hephaestus that helped them as most of the approved treatments were delivered by other parties and without the Hephaestus branding.

Downfall

Active for just over 25 years they finally went bust over a legal case brought in the UK in 2044. The case alleged violation of ethical research practices and of having falsified results lead to the company being wound up. Three care homes, and the children resident in them, found themselves transferred into local authority care.

see [scandal](#) for more details of the end of Hephaestus Genetics.

Genetic Treatments

The genetically perfect, as the advocates would call them, are not scattered over the entire planet equally. There are a few places where the techniques were pioneered that have more of them than anywhere else, notably the UK. The UK was the first country in the world to legalise genetically modifying people when it allowed the creation of embryos in 2013 from two mothers and one father. This eliminated diseases linked to faulty genes in maternal mitochondria which are passed down through the egg.

Initially the techniques were tested mainly in England, near the major university laboratories that hosted centres of excellence in human genetics. Once techniques were mastered they tended to spread to other parts of the EU, Russia and the top elite of countries that could afford to travel for treatment. The US got some of it, but this was complicated by the stance of health insurance companies who refused to fund this treatment, fearing that people born with no genetic susceptibility to disease were less likely to buy health insurance. The treatments weren't cheap, so only a small proportion of the population ever took it up, way under half of one percent.

Not all of those treated were embryos. A large number of adults received genetic therapy to correct known deficiencies in genes that caused life shortening conditions. Up to 10,000 individuals in the UK over the period of a decade, perhaps ten times that number in Europe. In terms of the total world population the numbers treated are tiny. There are less than two million people worldwide that could be classed as 'Genetically Perfect'. Out of a world population of 8.5 billion that's too small to express as a meaningful percentage. Of those treated since 2040 the majority have been babies born to those choosing to live in orbit. The rate of the orbital births getting treatment is over 85%, the remaining

15% of live births in orbit are often treated post-birth as the chance of untreated babies surviving a year without getting cancer or leukaemia is about 50%. In practical terms all those born in space and staying there until at least age 5 are genetically perfect.

Perfects

[perfects](#), [gm](#), [hephaestus](#), [2044](#), [genetic](#), [treatment](#)

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