Top stories in this newsletter

First human eggs grown in laboratory
Researchers at the University of Edinburgh have grown human eggs in a laboratory for the first time. This new technique is both an opportunity to explore the development of human eggs, as well as a possible door to new methods of preserving fertility for children who undergo cancer treatment. The technique requires further work in the future, however, with only 10% of eggs reaching maturity. It also remains unclear how viable the eggs are, given they have not yet been fertilized. Read more here.

Couples search for surrogates in Ukraine
Through the story of Ana, this article explores the recent trend of foreign couples seeking surrogate mothers in Ukraine. This has become increasingly popular since 2015, when reports of exploitation caused the Asian options to close their surrogacy industries one by one. Unable to look for surrogates in Asia, many couples turn to Ukraine, one of the few remaining locations where surrogacy can still be arranged at a much lower cost than in the US. Read more about Ana’s story here.

Feature: What does it mean to die?
This New Yorker piece features the story of Jahi McMath, a young girl who was left brain-dead due to complications from a routine tonsillectomy. This case involves many controversial issues, such as when a person should be considered deceased, whether public resources should be used on the care of a person who has been declared brain-dead and whether there is a difference in the quality of healthcare provided to underprivileged persons and/or persons of color. A bioethicist has also indicated concern that this case will lead to fewer people registering as organ donors, since the acceptability of this practice depends on the idea that patients are dead before their organs are removed. Read more about these controversies here.

In Entertainment: You can love the brain and football
Professor Francis X. Shen argues in this article that it is possible to embrace neuroscience and a love of American football. The primary reason is that the public tends to overestimate the risks of concussions, as demonstrated by a study he and others recently ran online. The problem with this is that it affects the cost-benefit analysis and prevents parents from properly taking into account the benefits involved. Read more about these benefits here.