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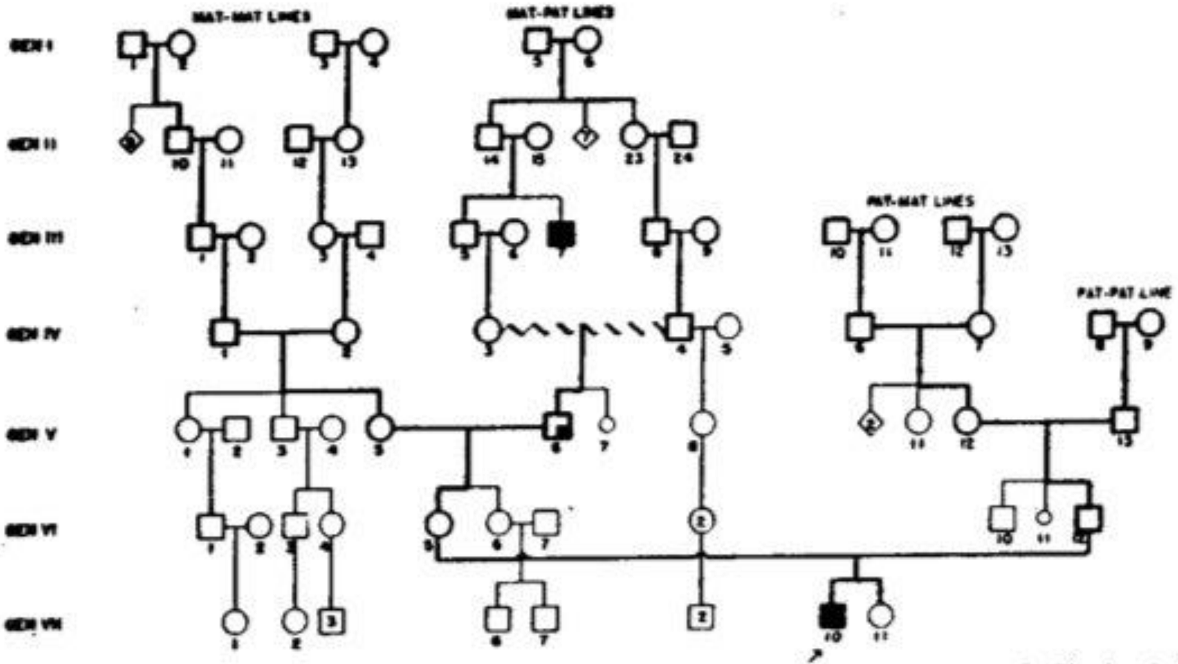

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Eradicating Pathology, Preserving Diversity: Genetic Deafness Research in 20th-Century America

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10 November 2016, 14 – 16.00 Uhr, Peterhof R 1

Is deafness a disability to be prevented by genetic technology or merely a non-pathological variation that has given rise to a sociocultural minority? Is it ethical to prevent the birth of a child with deafness, and are deaf parents acting immoral if consciously choosing a deaf child? Over the last 100 years, American geneticists have shifted from a clearly medical-pathological definition to acknowledging Deaf culture and the Deaf community, conscious of the potential ‘genocidal’ impact of reproductive technology. The history of genetic deafness provides new insights to the history of eugenics and genetics, reproductive rights and social activism. Negotiations over deafness as disability or difference are an integral part of 20th-century debates over citizenship and national identity, and over whom and what science and medicine should serve.

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