

Should human germline gene editing even be considered for future use?

Rumors about human germline editing experiments prompted scientists to gather in January in Napa, Calif. Discussions there led two groups to publish recommendations. One group, [reporting](#) March 26 in *Nature*, called for scientists to “agree not to modify the DNA of human reproductive cells,” including the nonviable zygotes used in the Chinese study. A second group, [writing](#) in *Science* April 3, called for a moratorium on the clinical use of human germline engineering, but stopped short of saying the technology shouldn’t be used in research. Those researchers say that while CRISPR technology is still too primitive for safe use in patients, further research is needed to improve it. But those publishing in *Nature* disagreed.

“Are there ever any therapeutic uses that would demand ... modification of the human germ line? We don’t think there are any,” says Edward Lanphier, president of Sangamo BioSciences in Richmond, Calif. “Modifying the germ line is crossing the line that most countries on our planet have said is never appropriate to cross.”

Other researchers, including Harvard University geneticist George Church, think germline editing may well be the only solution for some people with rare, inherited diseases. “What people want is safety and efficacy,” says Church. “If you ban experiments aimed at improving safety and efficacy, we’ll never get there.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Editing human germline cells sparks ethics debate](#)