

National Academy of Sciences seeks to set guidelines for use of CRISPR-Cas9

The National Academy of Sciences, responding to concerns expressed by scientists and ethicists, has launched an ambitious initiative to recommend guidelines for new genetic technology that has the potential to create “designer babies.”

The technology, called CRISPR-Cas9, allows scientists to edit virtually any gene they target. The technique is akin to a biological word-processing program that finds and replaces genetic defects.

The technique has taken biology by storm, igniting fierce patent battles between start-up companies and universities that say it could prove as profitable and revolutionary as recombinant DNA technology, which was developed in the 1970s and 1980s and launched the biotechnology industry.

But CRISPR has also brought ethical concerns.

Recently, scientists in China reported carrying out the first experiment using CRISPR gene-editing to alter the DNA of human embryos. Although the embryos were not viable and could not have developed into babies, the announcement ignited an outcry from scientists warning that such a step, which could alter human genomes for generations, was just a matter of time.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: National Academy of Sciences To Tackle Ethics Of CRISPR-Cas9, Gene-Editing Technology