

Are concerns over danger of CRISPR eclipsing potential benefits?

CRISPR is causing a major upheaval in biomedical research. Unlike other gene-editing methods, it is cheap, quick and easy to use, and it has swept through labs around the world as a result. Researchers hope to use it to adjust human genes to eliminate diseases, create hardier plants, wipe out pathogens and much more besides. “I’ve seen two huge developments since I’ve been in science: CRISPR and PCR,” says John Schimenti, a geneticist at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Like PCR, the gene-amplification method that revolutionized genetic engineering after its invention in 1985, “CRISPR is impacting the life sciences in so many ways,” he says.

But although CRISPR has much to offer, some scientists are worried that the field’s breakneck pace leaves little time for addressing the ethical and safety concerns such experiments can raise. Some scientists want to see more studies that probe whether the technique generates stray and potentially risky genome edits; others worry that edited organisms could disrupt entire ecosystems.

“This power is so easily accessible by labs — you don’t need a very expensive piece of equipment and people don’t need to get many years of training to do this,” says Stanley Qi, a systems biologist at Stanford University in California. “We should think carefully about how we are going to use that power.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [CRISPR, the disruptor](#)