Language matters when reporting gene editing stories

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

The Center for Genetics and Society and many others have long argued that it's important to draw a sharp policy line between heritable genetic modification and genetic alterations aimed at treating an existing patient – gene therapy. That does not, however, mean that gene therapy is problem-free. With the CRISPR boom of the last three years, a number of biotech companies have been planning human clinical trials for a range of gene therapy applications, which raise important questions of their own.

Amid the excitement about the new generation of genetic engineering tools and protocols, and the fast-paced reporting on research developments and scientists' speculations, important distinctions are too often being muddied and serious concerns are too often overlooked.

Three recent developments in the gene therapy world, for example, were sometimes reported in ways that not only conflated somatic and germline applications, but also failed to distinguish *in vivo* treatments (inserting specifically programmed CRISPR complexes inside the body, in which case precision is paramount) from *ex vivo* approaches (editing cells in a lab, and then inserting the successfully edited cells into a patient's body). On the other hand, the developments did lead reporters to raise concerns about the huge costs associated with the field of gene therapy, and the many obstacles still left to overcome.

Read full, original post: Gene Therapy: Comeback? Cost-Prohibitive?