

Should scientific community embrace germ line gene therapy?

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Until now, only one approach — somatic cell human gene therapy (SHGT) — has been viable. But another approach — “germ line gene therapy” (GLGT), which, by modifying sperm, eggs, or embryos, creates a heritable change that affects future generations — is now also approaching practicability.

In May 2016, Chinese researchers published the results of a partly successful attempt to edit genes using nonviable embryos that were going to be discarded. The experiment precipitated a firestorm in the scientific community, with some researchers and bioethicists calling for an absolute ban on attempts to treat even imminently lethal diseases with gene-editing techniques that would affect germ cells.

However, not only does GLGT not require the manipulation of normal embryos, it may not even demand the manipulation of abnormal embryos. And perhaps the most important point in the debate is that GLGT can save lives.

People must not be afraid to move forward. If we do not take the first step, we will never reach our goal. When that goal is saving lives, standing in place is unjustifiable.

Read full, original post: [In defence of germ line gene therapy](#)