

Bioethicists should “get out of the way” of groundbreaking germline-altering research

As psychiatrist and American Enterprise Institute scholar Dr. Sally Satel has [written](#), there are indeed complex and difficult questions in medical research and practice on which bioethicists’ opinions may be useful, such as whether students should be permitted to use cognition-enhancing drugs, what constitutes informed consent,...and so on.

But, she argues, their judgments should be sought only to frame issues, not to settle them. Moreover, their views should not be given “greater weight than other stakeholders — physicians, scientists, legal scholars — who consider the same issues carefully and come to different conclusions....”

Too often, however, bioethicists’ views are considered dispositive, or at least authoritative, and those opinions can do great, or even lethal damage.

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[In one case], the first partial liver transplant from a living donor—from a mother to her 21-month-old daughter—almost didn’t occur...[A]t the time, Boston University ethicist George J. Annas [saw](#) the mother’s choice of whether to offer part of her liver as inherently coercive: “The parents basically can’t say no.”

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[B]ioethicists have a moral obligation to “get out of the way” of groundbreaking research to treat horrific genetic diseases even if the treatments involve alterations in the “germ line” of patients that could result in the inheritance of the genetic corrections in future generations.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [When ‘Bioethics’ Harms Those It Is Meant To Protect](#)