

Calling for a 'richer' global conversation about CRISPR, gene editing

Over the past three years, leading scientists have called for global deliberation on the possible effects of gene editing on the human [future](#). In our view, the discussions that have taken place fall far short of the expansive, [cosmopolitan conversation that is needed](#).

An important milestone was the International Summit on Human Gene Editing, held in Washington DC in December 2015.

...

[However,] the meeting format offered little opportunity for deeper listening or learning. Instead, it encouraged an all-too-common [pattern](#). Discussion split into two camps: scientific experts explored technical issues, whereas scholars who study science and society [addressed questions](#) about the possible disruption to social norms. The two camps did not inform each other.

To break out of this bifurcation between the 'science' and the 'ethics', methods must be found to get people to engage substantively with each other. In our view, an entirely new type of infrastructure is needed to promote a richer, more complex conversation — one that does not originate from scientific research agendas but that instead invites multiple viewpoints.

We advocate the establishment of a global observatory for gene editing, as a crucial step to determining how the potential of science can be better steered by the values and priorities of society.

...

An international, interdisciplinary observatory would be an important step in this direction.

Editor's note: Sheila Jasanoff is a professor of science and technology studies at the Harvard Kennedy School. Benjamin Hurlbut is associate professor of biology and society at Arizona State University.

Read full, original post: [A global observatory for gene editing](#)