Chinese biopharma firms ‘well ahead’ in race to use CRISPR in humans

Contrary to what you might believe, biopharma companies in the US are not the leaders in clinical trials using gene editing tech. While a slate of US/European pioneers have been lining up their first human trials, investigators in China are already well ahead in testing CRISPR-edited cells in humans, according to a deep dive on gene therapies from Goldman Sachs analyst Salveen Richter.

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Last year alone, Richter adds, the National Natural Science Foundation of China provided funding for more than 90 CRISPR projects — more than 270 over the last 4 years. With no regulations on these gene editing projects, hospitals in China in particular have been quick to accelerate their CRISPR work.

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What is this kind of market worth for the rivals looking to compete in it? That depends on the supply of patients.

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The most lucrative diseases for these new curative therapies, Richter adds, would be big fields like hemophilia or areas where there’s a large supply of new patients each year — like cancer. Spinal muscular atrophy, which afflicts a standard set of infants each year, is also viable.

That may not be the kind of math that biopharma execs like to discuss in public, but it’s certainly the kind of equations they review carefully while deciding how to spend R&D budgets.

Read full, original post: As gene editing explodes, a new report from Goldman says Chinese groups are seizing the lead on CRISPR and CAR-T studies