

Why the patent system could help shape the future of gene editing

A crucial part of the arsenal for shaping the future of gene editing is hiding in plain sight: the patent system. In the past, patents have played an important part in regulating new technologies and research, from the atom bomb to work involving human embryonic stem cells.

...

How could patents help? These legal instruments — which give inventors the right to prevent others from commercializing their technologies — are usually seen solely as contracts that incentivize innovation. In fact, they can do much more, directly and indirectly.

...

What I'm calling for, however, [is] more-formal, comprehensive, government-driven regulation using the patent system.

This would cover all domains of gene editing, not just certain areas of research. It would have more transparency and political legitimacy than individual efforts ever could, by involving government institutions that are explicitly charged with representing the public interest. And it would enable governments to exploit the unique vantage point that patent offices have on the early stages of scientific fields and industries.

...

Under such a framework, the committee could identify inventions that are likely to be so important to the public interest that the government should monitor closely how associated patents are used and licensed, and step in to force broad licensing if a patent holder charges too high a price for access to their invention.

Read full, original post: [Use the patent system to regulate gene editing](#)