

## 'Family duty' could explain why so many Chinese couples signed up for controversial 'CRISPR baby' experiment

Young adults in China feel a powerful cultural obligation to marry and have kids, but that life plan suddenly looks unattainable to people told they're infected with HIV, particularly for the many who can't afford or are unaware of treatments that would allow them to have uninfected children.

So when an ambitious scientist offered HIV-positive men and their spouses what seemed to be a way out of this despair, several hundred couples in China jumped at the chance, expressing interest in a clinical trial that promised to deliver them babies forever protected from HIV infections.

The trial, involving gene editing of embryos created through IVF, led to the [claimed birth of twin girls](#) last November and a second, apparently [still-ongoing, pregnancy](#). The project has since been [condemned by scientists](#) worldwide as unethical human experimentation and [Chinese authorities have halted the project](#) while they investigate the scientist, [He Jiankui](#).

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But Cui [Zixiao] and Martin Yang, director of China AIDS Walk, told STAT that societal pressure to have children was likely an important factor — along with the parents' desire to shield their children from the discrimination and ostracism people living with HIV endure in China.

Given these circumstances, Yang said, "there will always be a few hopefuls who want to try new technology."

**Read full, original post:** [Family duty is a powerful force in China. Is that why so many couples signed up for the 'CRISPR babies' experiment?](#)