

Why the quest to create ‘super babies’ is a ‘fool’s errand’

Gene-edited babies should probably always be prohibited, not because of fears of creating inequalities and advantaged “super babies,” but because of the reality that editing an embryo is not medically necessary.

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The recent case of the Chinese researcher who alleged to create the first gene-engineered baby was only an extension of [the ambition to be “first”], and not the last scientist who will seek to make a splash with provocative rogue science.

...Consider Danielle Posthuma’s [work](#) in Nature Genetics in 2017 tied 52 genes to human intelligence (though no single variant contributed more than a tiny fraction of a single percentage point to intelligence). Will college applicants begin stapling their 23 and Me results to their entrance applications? Will parents seek to engineer smarter kids in the lab? I want to convince you it is a fool’s errand. In fact, distributions of risk for mental disorders are also increasingly viewed to involve hundreds or thousands of gene variants. Thus, while the volition to improve our genomes is clearly evident by the ambition of scientists—and codified in the myths of Gattaca, Jurassic Park, Andromeda Strain and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein—the reality is that genetic risks and advantages are not as straightforward as computer circuits.

Read full, original post: [The Myth of Genetic Superbabies](#)