Gene from controversial CRISPR baby experiment could deliver new stroke treatment

A widely criticized experiment last year saw a researcher in China delete a gene in twin girls at the embryonic stage in an attempt to protect them from HIV. A new study suggests that using a drug to delete the same gene in people with stroke or traumatic brain injuries could help improve their recovery.

The new work shows the benefits of turning off the gene in stroke-induced mice by using the drug, already approved as an HIV treatment. It also focuses on a sample of people who were naturally born without the gene. People without the gene recover faster and more completely from stroke than the general population does, the researchers found.

The combined results suggest the drug might boost recovery in humans after a stroke or traumatic brain injury, says [researcher] S. Thomas Carmichael.

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The drug used to block the activity of CCR5 has been on the market since 2007 and is approved as a treatment to slow the progression of HIV and AIDS. Carmichael gave the drug, called maraviroc, to stroke-induced mice. Knocking down the gene's activity in the brain's motor neurons "had a tremendous effect on recovery," he says.

Read full, original post: Gene in Infamous Experiment on Embryos Points to New Stroke Treatment