

## The promise of genetic engineering in medicine could be threatened by ‘bad press’

Because the disorder is caused by a single mutation in a single gene, sickle cell disease has long been seen as [an obvious target for genetic engineering](#), and CRISPR is considered a likely method to use. The technique [employs](#) specialized stretches of DNA that work like molecular scissors to snip out precise portions of DNA, like those with the mutations that cause sickle cell, and replace them with other genes.

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Black patients are understandably reluctant to roll up their sleeves for an experimental treatment offered by a medical establishment that has served them so poorly in the past. And the terrible headlines about China’s new CRISPR babies have fed existing fears about poor ethics and oversight in medical research.

But the crisis of sickle cell anemia is so deep and painful that some black community leaders — coming from churches, health organizations and far too many funerals of young sickle cell patients — are encouraging change. Religious leaders [are forming unlikely alliances](#) with genetic researchers to encourage people of color to be open to these new therapies and consider participating in the clinical trials needed to test them.

**Read full, original post:** [Bad press about genetic engineering could scare off those who would benefit most](#)