

Viewpoint: No, we don't need a moratorium on germline gene editing

Should researchers put the brakes on genetically engineering babies? Leading scientists and ethicists recently [called for a moratorium](#) on clinical applications of [germline gene editing](#): inheritable alterations to the DNA of embryos to improve kids' health or other features.

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The call for a moratorium is grounded in two main concerns. Its supporters assert, first, that the risks of gene editing are simply too uncertain and potentially large to proceed. Second, the deeply controversial nature and potential social impact of altering human DNA means researchers need "[broad societal consensus](#)" before proceeding.

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However, several scientists have [pushed back](#) against the call for a moratorium, including gene-editing pioneer Jennifer Doudna and geneticist George Church. [As a biomedical ethicist](#), I believe the objectors raise valid concerns about the relevance and usefulness of a moratorium that are worth reflecting upon.

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[A] moratorium is an overly crude and arbitrary means of regulating a controversial new technology. While the technology is currently not fit for clinical use, are scientists so certain that it still won't be within five years' time? More flexible regulatory frameworks that do not include arbitrary timelines could better adapt to rapid scientific developments and shifts in public perceptions.

Read full, original post: [A Case Against a Moratorium on Germline Gene Editing](#)