

Gene-editing pioneer Jennifer Doudna calls for greater accountability on anniversary of China scientist CRISPR gene editing human embryo

There are key moments in the history of every disruptive technology that can make or break its public perception and acceptance. For CRISPR-based genome editing, such a moment occurred 1 year ago.

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In November 2018, at the Second International Summit on Human Genome Editing in Hong Kong, scientist He Jiankui announced that he had broken the basic medical mantra of “do no harm” by using CRISPR-Cas9 to edit the genomes of two human embryos in the hope of protecting the twin girls from HIV. His risky and [medically unnecessary](#) work stunned the world and defied prior calls by my colleagues and me, and by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences and of Medicine, for an effective moratorium on human germline editing. It was a shocking reminder of the scientific and ethical challenges raised by this powerful technology.

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The “CRISPR babies” saga should motivate active discussion and debate about human germline editing. With a new such study under consideration in Russia, appropriate regulation is urgently needed. Consequences for defying established restrictions should include, at a minimum, loss of funding and publication privileges. Ensuring responsible use of genome editing will enable CRISPR technology to improve the well-being of millions of people and fulfill its revolutionary potential.

Read full, original post: [CRISPR's unwanted anniversary](#)