China has banned germline gene editing, calling the technology, “irresponsible and not permitted.” A recent study suggested that losing weight may somehow contribute to cancer. Is there any truth to this odd correlation? Our rapidly changing culture might be setting us up for depression and other mental health disorders. What can we do to protect ourselves?

Podcast:

Join hosts Dr. Liza Dunn and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 279 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- **Irresponsible**: China bans clinical research on germline human gene editing

Echoing widespread criticisms of germline gene editing, Chinese regulators have banned the technology for the foreseeable future, arguing that the “potential detrimental impacts and risks … are still unpredictable.” Germline editing allows scientists to alter the DNA that parents pass down to their children and subsequent generations. In other words, it allows them to alter the genetic makeup of people who don’t yet exist. Which detrimental impacts does China have in mind, and how can they be prevented? Is it even possible to prevent them?

- **Losing weight can cause cancer? Here’s how epidemiologists’ studies can skew science to fit ideological viewpoints**

A headline-grabbing study recently found that people who lost weight developed more cases of cancers than a comparable group of individuals whose weight remained stable. The implication of the study is that losing weight, widely recognized as a major step toward improving your metabolic health, increases your risk for cancer. Predictably alarmist news stories amplified the correlation, though a careful look at the study itself shows that this association between weight loss and cancer means very little.

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- **Why are people suffering from rising mental health issues? Our culture and environments might be changing too fast for evolution to keep up**
Living alone in crowded cities, far away from nature and separated from family and community, has left many of us depressed and anxiety ridden. That’s an increasingly popular hypothesis among social scientists who argue that humans evolved to live in smaller societies that have little in common with our modern way of life. Civilization isn’t going anywhere, of course, so what steps should we take to protect our mental health in this foreign environment?

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