



Moratorium on genetic engineering of the human germline

GSCN statement concerning the genetic modification of the human germline

The German Stem Cell Network (GSCN) supports a worldwide moratorium on manipulation of the human germline by genetic engineering in reproductive medicine*. Recent progress in the techniques of genome editing, in particular by the CRISPR-Cas9 system, should facilitate the genetic tailoring of cell and tissue therapeutics in the future but raise far-reaching ethical issues. These methods would allow rapid intervention in the human germ line leading to the inheritance of both targeted and unwanted genetic alterations introduced into the genome. Accordingly, a group of leading scientists, including an inventor of the CRISPR system, published a statement in March 2015 in the journal *Science* warning against germline alterations in human beings and calling for a worldwide moratorium. They recommend that scientists should "strongly discourage, even in those countries with lax jurisdictions where it might be permitted, any attempts at germline genome modification for clinical application in humans, while societal, environmental, and ethical implications of such activity are discussed among scientific and governmental organizations." The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) also supports a moratorium on interventions in the human germline by genome engineering in reproductive medicine. The GSCN supports the call to respect the integrity of the human germ line worldwide and to start a public and well informed discussion concerning the scientific, medical, legal and ethical aspects of human genome editing.

**These methods are not permitted in Germany by regulations in §5 of the German Embryo Protection Act (Embryonenschutzgesetz).*

Links:

[Nature: Don't edit the human germ line \(03/12/15\)](#)

[Science: A prudent path forward for genomic engineering and germline gene modification \(03/19/15\)](#)

[ISSCR: The ISSCR Statement on Human Germline Genome Modification \(03/19/2015\)](#)