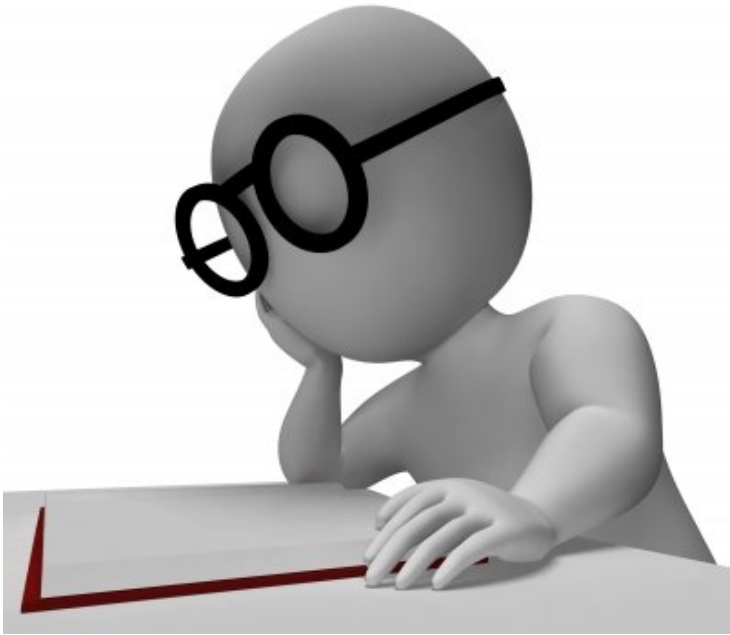


NIH bans funding for gene editing of human embryos

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Singapore: Earlier last month, a group of researchers from China's Sun Yat-Sen University made [headlines](#) when they claimed that they had successfully completed the editing of human embryo for the first time.

The study published in the journal *Protein Cell*, stirred up a lot of controversy among the scientific fraternity, with many eminent researchers warning that editing a human embryo was illegal and could cause permanent damage to the future progeny.

Now, the US-based National Institutes of Health has announced that the organization will not fund any research that uses gene-editing technologies in human embryos.

In a statement, Dr Francis Collins, director, NIH, said, "Research using genomic editing technologies can and are being funded by NIH. However, NIH will not fund any use of gene-editing technologies in human embryos. The concept of altering the human germline in embryos for clinical purposes ... has been viewed almost universally as a line that should not be crossed."

Dr Collins said the agency had ethical concerns about funding genetic alterations that could be passed to future generations of people who cannot consent to being born with modified DNA.

Few researchers, however, have supported the Chinese study stating that gene-editing of embryos could help prevent genetic diseases in humans. "I am not in favor of the NIH policy and I believe that the Chinese paper shows a responsible way to move forward," said, Mr David Baltimore, a biologist at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.