

SHOULD WE BE ALARMED THAT DESIGNER BABIES WALK AMONG US?

Professor Gerald Schatten, USA

Designer Babies walk among us... And some believe that they have been walking among us for the past three decades. Certainly, with the development of so-called 'mitochondrial replacement therapies,' whether for the treatment of maternal mitochondrial DNA mutations or unrelated infertility, the offspring from these 'three-parent' conceptions walk among us. Dr. He Jiankui claims that he implanted human embryos modified with CRISPR to conceive twin girls appears to have been verified by Chinese authorities, though the scientific evidence has not yet been reported. As such, it may be premature to conclude authenticity. Previously, claims of cloned humans have been shown to be false.

The thorny question as to what knowledge must be generated to condone designer babies attempts will be examined both dispassionately and passionately. The techniques for editing the human genome, approaching near perfect accuracy, are accelerating swiftly at stunning paces with and efficiency, simplicity, and at affordable costs. These newest approaches will be reviewed and then thorny medical applications for trying to avoid devastating human diseases and disorders will be considered, as well as equally compelling bioethical, evolutionary, scientific and societal concerns about genetically enhanced offspring.