

## Gene-editing a significant leap forward but only if used ethically

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**New Delhi:** Following the recent claims by He Jiankui, a scientist and professor of Biology at the Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, Guangdong, China, that he has successfully created the world's first gene-edited babies, there have been extreme reactions, most of them negative.

While many experts say that the development is a precursor to the long-term research that would happen over a period of time, the majority of scientists across the world have condemned it as unethical with many dismissing it as unwanted. Dr Jiankui has been accused of hiding his intentions and not disclosing his research to the university which employs him.



**Chinese scientist, Hu Jiankui.**

**In his comments, Mr David Brown, Medical Device Analyst at GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, mentioned, “While this claim remains unverified by a third party, He’s claim has drawn a great deal of international criticism due to the fact that human genome editing has not been proven to be safe, and acceptable ethical guidelines have yet to be fully drafted or agreed upon. Genomic editing in viable human embryos is banned to various degrees in many countries.”**

**“In China, however, there are no clear laws in place to prevent these actions, only guidelines. He’s claims highlight both the immediate need to develop strong international agreements on the ethical usage of human genome editing, and the necessity of strong legal frameworks surrounding what modifications, if any, are permitted, said Mr Brown, adding “If He’s claims are true, it represents a significant leap forward in the field of biomedical research and is expected to propel the advancement of products and technologies in this space on a global level.”**