



Progress Educational Trust
informing debate on assisted conception and genetics

PRESS RELEASE

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Progress Educational Trust responds to New Scientist exclusive reporting that five deaf Russian couples (and scientist Denis Rebrikov) want to try CRISPR to have a child who can hear

Sarah Norcross, Director of the Progress Educational Trust, said: 'It is to the credit of Denis Rebrikov that he is at least discussing openly his plans to use germline genome editing, to attempt to avoid hereditary deafness in children. This is far preferable to the secretive manner in which He Jiankui acted last year, when he was responsible for the birth of the world's first genome-edited babies.

'Nonetheless, Dr Rebrikov is proposing to do this in the face of a strong scientific consensus that such germline genome editing is not yet ready for use in the clinic, because questions of safety and efficacy - not to mention ethics - have yet to be resolved satisfactorily.

'It is not evident that Dr Rebrikov and his patients have a sufficiently compelling case to justify using this technology in this way at this time.'

The Progress Educational Trust is an independent registered charity whose purpose is to improve choices for people affected by genetic conditions and infertility, and to promote the responsible application of science.

ENDS

Notes for editors

For media interviews contact PET head of communications Catherine Hill at chill@progress.org.uk 07305-091466.

1. The Progress Educational Trust (PET) is a UK charity working to advance public understanding of, and engagement with, science, law and ethics in the fields of human

genetics, human reproduction, embryology and stem cell research. Funded by grants and public donations, PET aims to improve the choices for people affected by infertility or genetic conditions. <https://www.progress.org.uk/>

2. PET organises free-to-attend events debating the responsible application of reproductive and genetic science and publishes BioNews, a free comment and news service. Subscribe to BioNews at <https://www.bionews.org.uk/subscribe>

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