



For Immediate Release — Friday, January 17, 2020

## Ethics of gene editing the focus of ARRTI Speaker Series free public presentation

The explosive issue of gene editing and the ethical questions surrounding this emerging technique will serve as the focus for the first Alberta RNA Research and Training Institute (ARRTI) Speaker Series talk of 2020.

Dr. Eric Mathison, clinical ethicist with Alberta Health Services, will present *The Ethics of Human Gene Editing: Pathways and Roadblocks* on Tuesday, January 21 at 3 p.m. in room SA6010 of the University of Lethbridge's new Science Commons building.



The ethical issue of gene editing grabbed headlines in 2018 when it was announced that Dr. He Jiankui had edited the genes of twin baby girls conceived in vitro.

"It's an urgent discussion for scientists, ethicists and society at large," says the U of L's Dr. Marc Roussel, a professor in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry and member of ARRTI. "The development of tools for gene editing has outstripped regulatory frameworks and, to a great extent, discussions of the ethics of deploying these techniques to alter human embryos."

Mathison's presentation is from research he conducted as a postdoctoral fellow at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He will survey the current debate about the ethics of gene editing and discuss an ethically sound pathway for translation of these techniques to the clinic.

Roussel says the ethics of gene editing is a particular concern for members of ARRTI since the most powerful techniques currently available are based on RNA technologies.

“ARRTI has a long-standing commitment to the education of well-rounded students who will be equipped both to solve challenging scientific problems, and to engage with the difficult ethical questions that will arise throughout their careers,” he says. “We are therefore very pleased to host Dr. Mathison’s timely and important presentation, which we hope will stimulate a broader discussion both within the University and in the community.”

All members of the community are welcome to attend.

The ARRTI Speaker Series is sponsored by the RNA Society and by Lexogen.

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/ethics-gene-editing-focus-arrti-speaker-series-free-public-presentation>

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