CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE SCIENCES, HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

Newsletter

ELSI/RRI for Science

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Message from ELSI Hiroshima

We are pleased to launch the newsletter of the Center for Collaborative Sciences (ELSI Hiroshima). Through this newsletter, we will share the latest news on ELSI/RRI, updates on our activities, and research highlights from our members.

We hope the newsletter will bring you closer to ELSI Hiroshima and inspire new connections, dialogue, and collaboration.

Discover all the latest news and activities at ELSI Hiroshima!

01 Our New Facility

The new home of ELSI Hiroshima is now ready.

Renovation of the building where ELSI is housed was completed in January 2026, and it has served as the Center's main base since April. The building is located in front of the Phoenix Tower on the Higashi-Hiroshima Campus.

We offer a range of activities, including research support, ELSI/RRI consultations, and seminars. Please feel free to stop by whenever you're in the area.



Map: Center for Collaborative Sciences

02 Meeting Room Now Open

Our meeting room is now available to Hiroshima University faculty and staff.

Since July 1, 2026, the meeting room in our facility has been available to faculty and staff across the University.

It can be used for online meetings, small-group discussions, and other activities.



Meeting Room Information

Research Spotlight Bringing today's research closer to you

How Should Society Approach Heritable Human Genome Editing?

Keywords Genome Editing, Reproductive Medicine, International Cooperation



Tsutomu Sawai

Professor, Hiroshima University
Deputy Director, ELSI Hiroshima

researchmap

What should we consider if it became possible to edit the genes of an unborn child to prevent disease—and those changes could be passed on to future generations? My research explores such questions raised by advances in the life sciences. In a recent Nature Medicine article, I examine the rules and challenges of human genome editing in light of Japan's new legislation.

In July 2026, Japan enacted a law prohibiting, with criminal penalties, the transfer of genome-edited human embryos into a uterus for reproductive purposes. This marks a significant shift from non-binding guidelines to enforceable law. Basic research involving such embryos remains possible under certain conditions, while genome-editing treatments involving non-heritable changes to patients' cells fall outside the law's scope.

However, national laws have limits. People may seek procedures prohibited at home in countries with fewer restrictions. That is, no country alone can effectively govern technologies affecting future generations.

Even if heritable genome editing becomes safer, should we use it? Future children cannot consent, and efforts to prevent disease may foster attitudes that devalue the lives of people with certain traits. As science advances, we need to keep discussing these questions as a society.

The new law is a starting point. Researchers, healthcare professionals, people directly affected, and the public need to engage in dialogue and develop frameworks for international cooperation. How should we take responsibility today for choices affecting future generations? I hope to continue exploring this question together with the wider public.

Article

Tsutomu Sawai. "A binding ban, and its limits: Japan legislates on heritable human genome editing." *Nature Medicine* (Correspondence). nature.com/articles/s41591-026-04641-x

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J-PEAKS

The Center for Collaborative Sciences is also involved in Hiroshima University's J-PEAKS initiative.