

BAC to review stand on genetic modifications

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The Bioethics Advisory Committee (BAC) is reviewing its current stand against genetic modifications with regard to genetic disorders passed on to children by their mothers.

The committee, set up by the Government to deal with issues arising from biomedical sciences research in Singapore, is seeking public feedback and views on whether emerging technology should be allowed to be used to prevent mitochondrial disorders.

A public consultation paper put up by the committee - which includes retired chief district judge Richard Magnus, chief executive of Science Centre Singapore Lim Tit Meng and senior consultant at the National Cancer Centre Singapore Professor Kon Oi Lian - looks at the ethical, legal and social issues arising from Mitochondrial Genome Replacement Technology (MGRT).

MGRT, which involves germline modification, a type of genetic modification, has so far not been permitted in Singapore. The BAC recommended against it in 2005 due to the lack of sufficient scientific evidence of its feasibility and safety.

However, in light of recent scientific developments and international debates, the committee is reviewing its position.