



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

## Graduate Student Discussion

### Year

2015

### Description

Part of unit 6 of the [Course on Genomics, Ethics, and Society](#), this graduate-level case study discusses issues of ethics, gene therapy, and human enhancement.

### Body

**Directions: Read the following scenario to prepare for the discussion.**

*Imagine that you are a doctor deciding who will receive gene therapy for hypertension (what is generally known as high blood pressure). The selected candidates will receive infusions of the SUMO-1 gene, where blood carrying the gene is pumped directly to the heart. This process has been shown to decrease blood pressure and improve general heart function, and does not pose any other health risks. Suppose you are trying to choose between two very serious cases. One person's hypertension is primarily the result of a congenital disorder inherited from the candidate's parents. The other candidate's hypertension is primarily due to a lifetime of poor habits, including smoking and lack of exercise. Suppose the current supply of SUMO-1 is limited, so only one candidate can be chosen at this time.*

**In this discussion forum, create a thread telling your classmates 1) which candidate you think should receive this form of gene therapy assuming the candidates' heart problems are equally life-threatening, and 2) why you think so. We expect a lively discussion, not an essay, and it is OKAY to change your views more than once during the discussion or stick to your**

**initial view throughout the discussion. Post your brief initial entry on the FIRST DAY so that everyone can respond to others' ideas throughout the discussion. You should contribute at least three times to the discussion. The [graduate discussion rubric](#) explains what we're looking for in this discussion: good writing quality, clarity and relevance, a response on the first day of discussion, then a collegial exchange with other members of the discussion; your posts should show knowledge and understanding of the readings, and you should try to develop an argument for which you provide support, and that engages critically and thoughtfully with the course materials.**

[Continue to Case Analysis and Instructions](#)

## **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

## **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

Instructor Materials

## **Topics**

Emerging Technologies

Safety

Public Health and Safety

## **Discipline(s)**

Genetics and Genomics

Life and Environmental Sciences