

Geneforum Web Interactive: Inheritable Genetic Modification

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Background:

Many members of the public have expressed a desire to obtain accurate information about genetic technology and its relevance to their lives. Geneforum, a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon, identified this need and devised strategies to meet it, as described in their mission statement: *"Geneforum seeks to promote dialogue and educate people about genome science and its impact on their lives. Using proven strategies, experienced science educators create environments for learning and facilitate forums for discussion. Classroom workshops, Town Hall Meetings, public opinion research, publications, an interactive website, and talk-radio programming work together to help Geneforum achieve these ends."*

Aims:

Primary Aim: Create an educational interactive on the topic of Inheritable Genetic Information (IGM), to be used on Geneforum's web site.

Goals of the Interactive:

- Stimulate participants' interest in IGM
- Deliver accurate factual information
- Encourage thoughtful contemplation of issues
- Elicit a response from participants
- Observe how participants react to information about the technology and its potential positive and negative outcomes.

Design of Interactive

1. Ask the participant a question
2. Provide further information relevant to the question
3. Ask the question again to give the participant an opportunity to change his/her answer
4. Show the participant a pie chart of all responses received.

Challenge:

Write accurate, thorough, yet concise content to maintain participants' interest

Solution:

Provide a concise summary of the information relevant to a question, with links to more detailed explanations for those who are interested

Questions Asked:

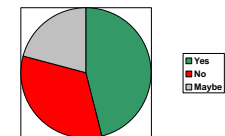
1. If you could choose some of the genes that your child will inherit, would you do it?
2. If scientists can develop IGM methods for use in humans, would you use it?
3. If it were possible to do so, do you believe IGM procedures intended to increase athletic ability should be permitted?
4. Assuming IGM procedures someday prove to be safe and effective, do you think insurance companies should cover them?
5. Should the use of IGM be strictly regulated?

Feedback

Results of question 1, answered by 187 Geneforum visitors.

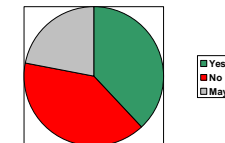
Before reading information:

Yes = 86, No = 62, Maybe = 39



After reading information:

Yes = 71, No = 75, Maybe = 41



Other Questions (Before/After)

#2 (n=68): Y = 26/24, N = 21/28, M = 21/16

#3 (n=53): Y = 6/5, N = 43/42, M = 4/6

#4 (n=54): Y = 22, N = 22/25, M = 6/7

#5 (n=59): Y = 47/46, N = 8/8, M = 4/5