Lab creates mouse with two fathers

theday.co.uk/lab-creates-mouse-with-two-fathers-4 3 February 2025

***Two dads**: For all of our 300,000 year history, every human being has had a genetic mother and a genetic father. Now, all that could change.*

Could two men have children one day? Chinese scientists have created mice without mothers. Some think this could have a huge impact on the way we live.

What is happening?

What is small, squeaky and has two fathers?

Scientists in China have managed to create a mouse with two fathers and no mother. They put together **genetic** material from two male mice to create an **embryo**.

Find out more

Nearly all animals have male and female members. They have children after a female egg is **fertilised** by the male.

But now scientists are finding ways to create animals with two same-sex parents.

Scientists have tried to do this before and failed. Many of the babies have died shortly after being born due to health problems. Those that become adults cannot have their own **offspring**.

But this is still a big moment. We have managed with mice. Will we soon be able to create new humans with two biological mothers or fathers, rather than one of each?

This could change the way we live.

Same-sex couples are currently unable to have their own children where both are biological parents. They need help from another man or woman. This would change that.

It could also change the roles mothers and fathers play in the life of children.

But scientists say this is a long way off for now. Science writer Helen Pitcher says: “For the **foreseeable** future at least, the process is too unpredictable to consider using on humans.”

Could two men have children one day?

Some say

Yes! It may not be tomorrow or the day after. But scientists are making progress all the time. The age of human babies with two biological fathers, or no biological father at all, may be just around the corner.

Others think

No! It is one thing to create a mouse with two fathers. But it is a very different thing to create a human with two biological fathers. Until we know they will definitely be healthy, we cannot do it.

Some people say

Six steps to discovery

1. **Connect**
How do you feel about this story? - How would you feel if you learnt you were the result of a lab experiment?

"Science is not a collection of facts; it is a process of discovery."

Robert Zubrin (1952 –), American engineer and author

What do you think?

2. **Wonder**
What questions do you have? - For example: How do scientists decide which experiments to do? Is there anyone who can stop an experiment?

3. **Investigate**
What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. **Construct**
What is your point of view? - What rules should scientists follow before experimenting with human children?

5. **Express**
What do others believe? - "Using lab mice is cruel." Do you agree? Discuss as a class.

6. **Reflect**
What might happen next? - Write a short story or a diary entry about a person who has two genetic fathers and no mother.

Glossary

Genetic - Relating to genes. Each of us has around 20,000 to 25,000 genes. We inherit them from our parents. Although most of our genes are the same as everyone else's, the small differences make us unique.

Embryo - A fertilised egg that is developing into a foetus.

Fertilised - Join an egg with male reproductive material to cause new life to grow.

Offspring - Children.

Foreseeable - Events that can be known or guessed about before they happen.