GENOME EDITING TECHNOLOGY PUBLIC DIALOGUES

DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES ACROSS COUNTRIES

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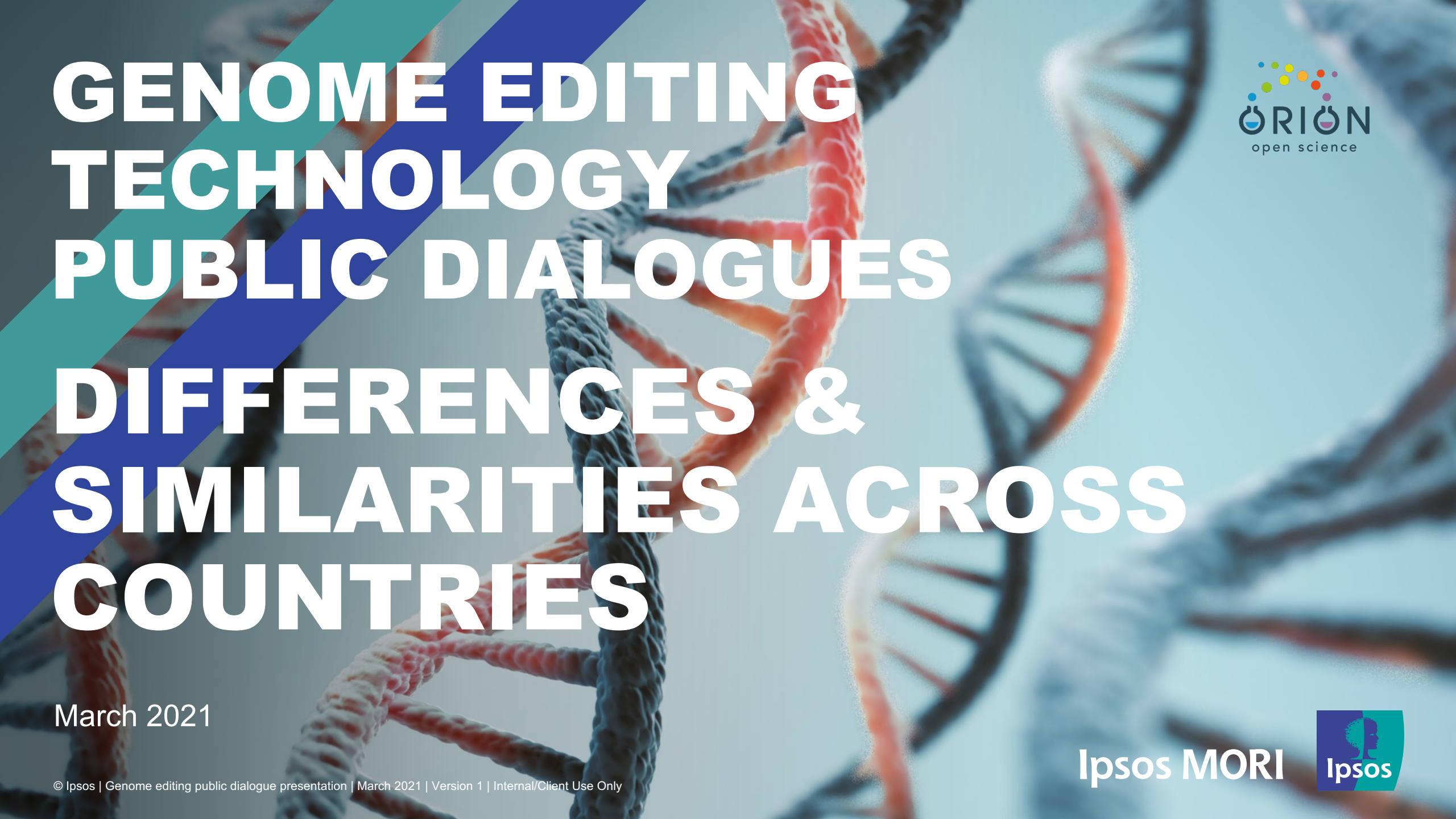

Differences across countries

01

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Starting points regarding genome editing technology

UK 

Initial impressions that the technology could be powerful for health/wellbeing and food production.

However, there were concerns about scientists using the technology responsibly.

Germany 

Optimism about medical benefits but concern that only the wealthy will be able to access it, and over the use of the technology for non-medical purposes.

Czech Republic 

Initial thoughts that it could be used in agriculture, but concerns about the tech being exploited by special-interest groups or non-democratic states.

Sweden 

Views that there needs to be improved education among the public r.e. genome editing technology (and its distinction to genetic modification), and around the current technical limitations of the technology.

Views of current and future uses of genome editing

UK 

Difficulty understanding current examples provided, but glad that scientists were conducting this research. Wanted more research to be done before the technology is used in applied ways.

Optimism about somatic genome editing for medical purposes, but concerned primarily about safety of tech.

Germany 

Surprise about progress already made with the technology.

Germline genome editing for medical purposes viewed as more efficient, but somatic genome editing seen as more applicable currently (as more controllable).

Czech Republic 

Strong support for basic research, even if this doesn't lead to applied outcomes.

Positive about somatic genome editing for medical purposes but thought its use could contribute to inequality. Some comfortable with the technology benefiting only a few at first, if it becomes more accessible.

Sweden 

Concerns about both current and future uses including: who funds research, equality of access to the tech, and knock on effects in nature.

Often consensus that somatic genome editing was acceptable, but questions around level of certainty in treating conditions.

Communication and engagement

UK 

Communicate successes and failures. Need for international agreement on uses of the technology.

Germany 

Highlight European regulatory framework.

Explain why conducting research in different applications (medical/plants/ animals).

Czech Republic 

Outline current and potential benefits using real-world applications.

TV for older engagement and social media for the young.

Sweden 

Focus on risks, and wanted to understand the research process in more detail.

Views on the art piece (ÆON)

UK 

Art piece evoked negative emotion towards the technology, though they recognised this was down to the artist's interpretation.

Some mistook it for a promotional piece.

Germany 

Divided over the art piece – proponents / opponents of using the technology.

Czech Republic 

Heated discussion around the art piece, majority rejected using genome editing technology to prolong age.

Sweden 

Artwork would work well in public spaces. Some would have preferred more interactive piece or one that provided backstory.

Similarities between the countries

02

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Similarities

- People were **unaware of genome editing** technology
- Public **support basic research** – they appreciate it is an important part of the scientific process
- Somatic editing for medical purposes most accepted, germline editing of human traits not acceptable
- Participants saw potential value in genome editing crops and animals, but this was less of a **priority** than **medical applications**
- Their **biggest worry** was the use of germline editing and **editing human traits** due to the possible ethical implications on society and unknown/unintentional consequences

Similarities

- **Regulation** and protection of the technology was **a priority**
- There is a need for **two-way engagement** and participants support the idea of scientists talking about their findings to aid transparency
- Need to strike a balance between **providing information but not overloading**
- Preferred methods of communication are **wide reaching** such as TV or online
- Art can be an effective way of sparking debate

THANK YOU.

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