

**UNITED NATIONS-affiliate Conference:
*New Dilemmas in Medicine***

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To Have the Best Child Possible: The Coming Age of “Procreative Beneficence?”

Genetic science has the potential to provide prospective parents with unprecedented control over their unborn child’s characteristics and attributes. In vitro fertilization and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis allow couples to sort out “good” from “bad” embryos prior to the start of pregnancy. Although these technologies are almost exclusively employed to detect genetic and/or chromosomal abnormalities among embryos, their use for selection of other medical and non-medical traits is conceivable. Tomorrow’s couples may have the opportunity to select embryos that will not only be the least susceptible to disease but which also have particular hair colors, skin tones, temperaments, or other personal attributes. Advocates of these eugenic initiatives have argued that future couples will have a moral obligation to pursue these technologies whenever possible to achieve the greatest benefit for their children, a principle known as “procreative beneficence.” Still, secular and non-secular critics alike argue that use of such technologies is immoral and may be potentially devastating to children and the structure of society.

- Udo Schuklenk, Ph.D, Queen’s University, Canada
- Barbara Katz Rothman, Ph.D, CUNY The Graduate Center
- Eva Kittay, Ph.D, SUNY Stony Brook
- Arthur Cooper, MD, Director, Trauma & Pediatric Surgical Services, Columbia University- Harlem Hospital Center
- Jennifer Kimball, Executive Director, Culture of Life Foundation
- Moderator: Jennifer E. Miller, Ph.D Cand, Executive Director, Bioethics International

Ethics and Pharmaceutical R&D: Who Should Be Responsible for Tomorrow’s Drugs?

The vast majority of prescription medications are developed and sold by private pharmaceutical companies. Under the current market-based system, however, some critics argue that pharmaceutical companies have financial incentives to support R&D that will yield the biggest return but which may not be in the best interests of improving the health of patients worldwide. They claim, for example, that pharmaceutical companies are far more interested in producing Viagra than vaccines, and call for change in paradigm of drug design and provision. Others point to the high costs of R&D and the critical importance of blockbuster drugs to the future development of less profitable vaccines and antibiotics; without the former, they argue, there could be no breakthroughs.

- Wilmot James, Executive Director of the Africa Genome Education Institute
- Angela Ballantyne, Ph.D., Yale University Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics, Visiting Scholar
- Jason L. Schwartz, Researcher, University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics
- Paul Howard, Ph.D., Director of the Manhattan Institute’s Center for Medical Progress
- Chalmers C. Clark, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Union College

Saying “No” to Patients: Medical Professionals as Conscientious Objectors

Central to the professional and ethical mandate of physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare personnel is the provision of medical care consistent with the best interests of their patients. However, news of healthcare professionals refusing to provide certain types of care to their patients under the auspices of “conscientious objection” have raised questions about the role of professionals’ personal beliefs in fulfillment of their purported obligations and duties. Examples include doctors refusing to terminate pregnancies, pharmacists refusing to dispense emergency contraception, certain Catholic hospitals receiving public funds refusing to issue morning-after birth control to rape victims, and others.

- Mark Mercurio, M.D., M.A., Yale University School of Medicine, Director of the Yale Pediatric Ethics Program, and Co-Chair of the Yale Hospital Ethics Committee
- Robert Baker, Director & Professor of Bioethics, Union Graduate College-Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Rosamond Rhodes, Ph.D., Professor & Director Medical Education, Bioethics Education, Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Laura Katzive, Deputy Director, International Legal Program, Center for Reproductive Rights
- Thomas Berg, L.C., Ph.D., Executive Director, Westchester Institute for Ethics & the Human Person