



Medical Science and the Unborn (b)

Next Step :- Is the extraction and usage now in some countries of the eggs of female foetus' that have miscarried or been aborted, being used as donor eggs or to develop embryo's for medical research. After all there is no existent human being who could object. For the mother of the embryo was never born herself.

Positives – Childless couples are given the chance to try for a baby. Genetic disorders can be treated in the laboratory and then reinserted back into the woman.

Negatives – Embryos that are frozen, destroyed or donated to be experimented on. The way this technology has opened up the doorway for other technologies to be developed off the back of this one.

Genetic Screening – Developed in its modern expression in 1970.

Development of DNA probes that detect variations in the genetic code that would point to various illnesses, ailments or abnormalities. A classic test is the one given to women over 35 for the testing of Downs Syndrome. This then enables women to choose to abort or keep the baby. In the future it may be possible for genetic problems to be corrected / repaired or eradicated altogether. Also it enables the woman to be helped prepare for the disabilities that the child will have. Now that the whole of a human DNA has been mapped, it may be possible in the future to detect all manner of possible problems including psychological, resulting in problems of who decides what is normal – who has the right to end lives and on what criteria and issues effecting life and medical insurance.

Positives – Detection – over time, may result in treatments in the womb that can cure problems before they develop. It enables at risk groups, to prepare themselves and the care they offer, if the baby is found to have a particular diagnoses.

Negatives – It is already the case that where genetic problems are found in most cases people are opting for abortions. Even some Christian's who have got pregnant later on in life have said if they found out that the child was disabled they would abort it!!

Somatic cell & Gene Therapy - Developed in 1989

This treatment is something that is being developed both for already born humans and those in the womb. Idea is the correction of gene defects in a person's cells through replacement, or gene correction. The aim is to modify particular cells to rectify a particular diseases. The focus is preventative and cure rather than genetic enhancement.

Positives – Are that in the embryo stage problems can be dealt with to resolve congenital and hereditary problems.

Negative – takes away the diversity of human life – is it playing God or playing Doctor?

Enhancement Genetic Engineering -

Insertion of a gene in an attempt to alter a particular trait of an individual. Idea is to enhance or develop that trait to the benefit of that individual or those associated.

Positives – ??

Negatives – You discuss it.

Stem Cell Research -

Stem cells are unspecified cells that can be manipulated to become cells with specific functions. Eg such as beating cells of a heart muscle, insulin producing cells for the pancreas or even nerve ending cells to repair nerve damage. Majority of stem cells are taken from either aborted foetus tissue or embryo's intended for in vitro fertilisation.

Although scientists can also get stem cells from adults the problem is that they tend only to replicate the particular cell type of the organ they are in or where they originate from. Embryo stem cells are still in early stages of development and so can be manipulated to produce ALL cell types of the human body. Also embryo stem cells multiply to a far greater degree than those found within an adult.