

The future of eugenics

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The future of eugenics

The potential use of genetic engineering has brought back past eugenics into bioethics disputes. There are opinions, such as those of Nicholas Agar, according to which non-coercive eugenics programs are inherently ethical. (Fletcher and Wertz 1990)

Adherents of liberal eugenics argue that it is difficult to determine just what matters as an improvement (except for serious illness) and considers diversity to be important. For example, is it better for a child to be very smart? Some parents can choose a reasonable level of intelligence for the child, assuming they will have greater social opportunities in the latter case. (Agar 2004) In the case of genetic improvements, critics fear parents who can exaggerate certain traits, and suggest different limits on genetic intervention. (Sandel 2007) Parents' choices must not substantially diminish future choices for their children. (Agar 2004)

The central moral principle of biomedical ethics involves an obligation "to confer benefits and remove harms." (Beauchamp 1979, 135)

Many theorists support the parents' ability to decide their children's genetics but contradict their obligation. In general, the idea is of a regulated system of the type considered by Robert Nozick, with controls to protect the well-being of future children and socially-valued goods (equal opportunities, elimination of discrimination). (Nozick 1974, 315) It goes on the assumption that the treatment of the disease can be mandatory, while genetic improvement is not. (Parens 1998)

Buchanan et al. believes that parents should be required to choose a genetic treatment that promotes the health and wellbeing of the child but does not suggest that all potential parents would be required to seek advice on reproduction and to use in vitro fertilization. (Buchanan 2011) Such a requirement would be a violation of their procreative freedom.

Critics fear that parents might obsessively focus on certain characteristics by exaggerating them. (Sandel 2007) For this reason, eugenics advocates propose limits on genetic intervention for improvement. Sara believes that variations could include, for example. (Sara 2014)

- only improvements that will benefit future children regardless of the life plan they choose to pursue and do not strengthen the problematic social norms, (Agar 2004) or
- only improvements that preserve the child's right to an open future, (Davis 2009) or
- only improvements that keep open possibilities and protect some central nuclei of our human nature, (Glover 2008) or
- only understandings that rational people will agree to be in the best interests of the child. (Green 2008)

A "free-market" approach to the genetic development of children may result in a homogenising. Parents may be inclined to choose according to models accepted by society. In this

case, improving technologies will "will grant racism and homophobia an unprecedented efficacy."
(Agar 2004, 148)

One concern about the obligation to produce the best child in a particular society is that social norms may be discriminatory, so that in the end, for example, most children will be boys, extremists and heterosexuals. (Sparrow 2011)

Jonathan Anomaly believes that the current demography of developed countries is worrying because people with a higher IQ, higher education and higher income, reproduce at relatively low levels because they have many other activities, they consider priority, including creative activities, volunteering, entertainment and career. (Anomaly 2017)

The widespread acceptance of abortion as a eugenic practice suggests that there may be little resistance to more sophisticated methods of eugenic selection. More and more, prenatal diagnosis of genetic disorders is performed based on molecular tests for mental disorders. (Leroi 2006)

The geneticists highlight that comparative genomic hybridization (CGH) microarrays could be used to examine a single embryo or fetus for thousands of mutations. (Van den Veyver and Beaudet 2006) These matrices, which are based on bacterial artificial chromosome, can detect deletions and duplications of aneurysms.

An impediment to a total prenatal universal screening for all known mutations is the invasive nature of the procedure - it requires amniocentesis or chorionic sampling to recover cells from the amniotic sac, and the traumatic nature of the treatment. It is possible that in the future a total mutation screening will not be used in prenatal diagnosis, but rather in pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD). As with prenatal diagnosis, PGD is generally performed only when a

family medical history suggests that the embryo is at risk of a specific disease. (Braude et al. 2002)
The procedure has spread rapidly, although it remains illegal in some countries.

Is it possible that one day, every citizen of an industrialized nation has survived, as an embryo, a PGD screen? Most do not think it is possible, as it is too expensive, inconvenient and limited. (Silver 2000) Nature invented an inexpensive, easy and pleasant way to conceive a child.

Some specialists, including Francis Crick, have suggested paying people not to reproduce or to establish a parental licensing scheme. (Crick 1963) There are reasons to support these policies. Such a policy would be effective only in the ideal case where there would be no corruption, bureaucracy, or black markets for pregnancy.

The human genome initiative was a fifteen-year study aimed at mapping and sequencing genes that constitute the human genome. Mapping determines the localization of genes on chromosomes, while sequencing identifies the parts of the gene. The initiative is geared towards the entire human genome, and so it will also provide information that would be vital for both positive and negative eugenic programs. (Fletcher and Wertz 1990)

The sequencing of the human genome can help us in human evolution. The human genome project can help us understand diseases for direct appropriate treatment, identify mutations that cause disease, and correct them.

The human genome project has made it possible to effectively modify the human species. Scientists such as Richard Lynn, Raymond Cattell and Gregory Stock have been calling for open eugenics policies using modern technology. (Lynn 2001)

A "sperm bank of geniuses" was set up by Robert Klark Graham, of which nearly 230 children were conceived (the best-known donors were Nobel Prize winners William Shockley and J.D. Watson). In 1999, the sperm bank was closed, two years after Graham's death.

The project has generated many ethical, legal and social concerns regarding possible discrimination. Also, some authors have highlighted the need to address the possible social consequences of mapping the human genome. (Lock, Young, and Cambrosio 2000)

Paul Freund and Laurence Tribe claimed that the unborn have the right to random genomes. ""The mystery of individual personality, resting on the chance combination of ancestral traits, is the basis of our sense of mutual compassion and at the same time, of accountability." (Freund 1972)

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