

Concern at 'three-parent' embryos



Catholic ethicists have voiced concerns at news that the Government intends to legalise a form of IVF that creates embryos using genetic material from three different people.

The procedure, called mitochondrial transfer, aims to prevent the transmission of genetic disorders from mother to child by replacing strands of the mother's DNA with those of a healthy donor. The UK would become the first country to allow the technique.

Helen Watts, of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre in Oxford, warned that the procedure attempts to artificially control reproduction by exploiting donors. "Couples who do not want to take the risk of passing on mitochondrial disease might want to consider ethical alternatives like adoption, which are far preferable to pursuing dangerous techniques of genetic engineering which exploit embryos and egg donors," she said. She also warned against the creation of embryos for IVF "as a source of spare parts".

MPs are expected to debate draft regulations in the autumn.

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