Should we chose our children?

Julie Blackwood
Jason Funt
Nick Morsillo
Deanna Nachreiner
Jordan Torok
Why we *should* chose our children

- It is not ethical to allow suffering when that suffering can be prevented.

- Costs for treating many disorders is often too expensive for the average person, but if the disorder is eliminated prior to birth this burden is lifted.
Diseases with potential to be cured

- Tay-Sachs disease
  - Current procedure: amniocentesis followed by abortion if test is positive
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)
  - More than 42 million people have HIV or AIDS
- Other genetically influenced diseases include Alzheimer’s, Breast Cancer, and Huntington’s disease
Eliminating unnecessary expenses

- Alzheimer’s Disease
  - Affects approximately 4 million people in the U.S.
  - Has three main risk factors: Down’s Syndrome, the presence of APOE e4 allele, and family history
  - Costs around $100 billion per year in suffering

- Genetic screening would eliminate some of this expense as well as the suffering to many afflicted individuals
- It is a physician’s duty to cure the sick
- Removing diseases from the population is analogous to vaccinations and medication
Why we shouldn’t choose our children

- Amniocentesis followed by abortion:
  - According to a 2003 CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, even in the case that the baby may be mentally impaired, 39% of the voters said abortion should be illegal.
  - Abortion is physically and mentally stressful on the mother, leaving mothers of aborted children almost twice as likely to harm themselves as those who chose not to abort.
Why we shouldn’t choose our children

- Pre-implantation genetic screening:
  - Many embryos are created in the lab and tested for various diseases; those with diseases are discarded, along with any unused extras.
  - This treats the fetus as more of a “commodity” than a human life.
  - Whatever happened to simply loving a child regardless of its imperfections?
Why we *shouldn’t* choose our children

- Depletion of the natural variation of the human genome:
  - Future implications on the next generations?
  - A decrease in the variability in other species genomes leads to problems like disease epidemics due to weaknesses
Why we shouldn’t choose our children

- **Cost implications:**
  - Insurance companies will not cover the cost of these procedures, which can run up to $15,000 per attempt.
  - These procedures would be made available only to those who could afford them, namely the wealthy.
  - This could potentially create a race of financially and genetically superior people.
References

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