

Session Type: 90-Minute Symposium

Number: 090-099

Title: Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: Beyond Natural Selection?

Session Start/End Time: Sunday, Feb 15, 2009, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Hotel:

Room: HRC Grand D North

Admission Policy

Synopsis: Huxley's Brave New World, where hundreds of years into the future the genetics of children would be determined artificially, remains a literary fiction. However, preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) already enables in vitro fertilization clinics across the globe to select embryos for implantation so that at-risk families can avoid passing on genetic disease to their children and to subsequent generations. In the future PGD will continue to develop wider applications and one day eventually could even influence the development of the human species. Yet many questions remain unanswered. For example, by interfering with natural selection, is there a risk to the healthy evolution of our species? Have genetic anomalies played a useful role in evolution? A moral concern is deciding which anomalies to erase. PGD already enables sex selection of our babies. What are the implications if choosing their sex becomes the norm? And what if PGD later allowed us to select children for desirable characteristics? The session will provide a scientific basis to discuss some of these questions using, as a starting point, recent studies of the situation and future trends of PGD on both sides of the Atlantic. Their results set the scene for a broader discussion on the implications of PGD for society.

Organized by:

Aidan Gilligan, European Commission, Joint Research Center, Brussels, Belgium

Presentations:

Symposium Organizer--**Aidan Gilligan**, European Commission, Joint Research Center, Brussels, Belgium

Moderator--**Karen Sermon**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

Choosing Children: Practical and Moral Choices Presented by Preimplantation Genetic Testing--**Tarek El-Toukhy**, St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, United Kingdom

Where Is Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis Going in Europe?--**Dolores Ibarreta**, European Commission, Joint Research Center, Seville, Spain

How Is Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis Perceived in the United States?--**Susannah Baruch**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD