



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

NBC OPINION ON MEDICALLY ASSISTED PROCREATION TECHNIQUES

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

(17th June 1994)

abstract

The document outlines a number of bioethical conclusions on medically assisted procreation techniques (the subject was treated in depth in the opinion dated 1995). The NBC takes a stand within the context of the heated debate that developed on this subject, following important rulings and discussions in scientific and ethical fields.

Firstly, the NBC reiterates the need to avoid excessive medicalization of procreation, emphasising that medicine should first and foremost play a therapeutic role, aimed at the prevention and removal of the causes of infertility.

Despite the difference in opinion of members regarding the protection of the human embryo, the document expresses unanimous condemnation of the use of assisted procreation inspired by racial prejudice; the removal of gametes or embryos without the interested parties' consent; the commercial or industrial exploitation of gametes, embryos and embryonic tissue or foetal tissue; the production of embryos solely for experimentation or research purposes; early embryonic division, surrogate maternity contracts, cloning and ectogenesis for reproductive purposes; the production of hybrids and chimeras and interspecific implantations for both procreative and research purposes.

With regard to the access criteria for assisted procreation techniques, the fundamental guiding principle must be the well-being of the unborn child. Therefore, the Committee excludes from the group of people who may access such techniques, women of a postmenopausal age, homosexual couples, and single women. There is no unanimous consent with regard to the prohibition of heterologous fertilization.

The document expresses the hope for the registration and control of the medical structures in which assisted procreation is carried out, including a periodic review of the related clinical protocols and the procedures for gaining informed consent. Lastly, it is recommended that there should be regulations governing this sector.

The opinion of the Committee is followed by two different motivations for adhesion, expressed by some members.