

Contemplating choice: Attitudes towards intervening in human reproduction in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

To date, relatively little is known about the ethical, legal and social responses to recent advances in reproductive and genetic technology outside of Europe and North America. This article reports on a survey carried out among doctors (n = 278) and medical students (n = 1256) in Sri Lanka to find out more about their responses to novel interventions in human reproduction such as In-Vitro Fertilization, Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis and genetic engineering. In the first part of the paper comparisons are drawn between this survey and a survey carried out in 1985 which also considered issues surrounding amniocentesis and therapeutic termination. The second part of the paper deals with more recent developments. The analysis reveals high levels of support for the use of new technologies in treating infertility and identifying genetic disorders. However, differences are apparent among the major religious communities represented in the sample and these are particularly in evidence in relation to prenatal genetic diagnosis. An important theme throughout both surveys is the continuing tension surrounding State policy on termination of pregnancy and the implications this has for the development of screening and counseling services where genetic disorders are concerned. © 2005 Taylor & Francis Group Ltd.