



PRESS RELEASE

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National Ethics Council publishes Opinion on polar body diagnosis

The German National Ethics Council is publishing its Opinion on polar body diagnosis today (Wednesday).

The Council does not see any need for specific legislation on polar body diagnosis at present, but continues to recommend the passing of a Reproductive Medicine Law to regulate the entire field of reproductive medicine.

In its Opinion Genetic Diagnosis Before and During Pregnancy (2003) the National Ethics Council already discussed the possibilities and limits of polar body diagnosis and evaluated its ethical and legal aspects in the context of preimplantation genetic diagnosis.

Polar body diagnosis is deemed to be permissible, and is practised, in Germany because the egg cell is examined at the “pronuclear stage” – that is, before an embryo as defined by the German Embryo Protection Law has come into being.

Against this background the National Ethics Council convened a group of experts for a hearing on 19 February 2004 to obtain information on advances in the technique, its application in the field of reproductive medical therapy and its use under the conditions laid down by the Embryo Protection Law.

The National Ethics Council welcomes the initiative of the centres that conduct polar body diagnosis in using the procedure only in the context of a joint scientific study.

The Opinion can be accessed online at:

<http://www.ethikrat.org/english/publications/opinions.html>

The German National Ethics Council

The German National Ethics Council's task is to provide a forum for interdisciplinary discourse between the natural sciences, medicine, theology and philosophy, and the social and legal sciences.

It expresses views on ethical issues relating to new developments in the field of the life sciences and on their consequences for the individual and society.

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