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Three-person DNA

Sir, We, 55 members of the Italian parliament, from a diversity of parties (left, centre and right-wing) urge our British colleagues not to authorise the creation of human embryos with DNA from three people, so-called "mitochondrial donation". The creation of such embryos could have uncontrollable and unforeseeable consequences, affecting future generations, and modifying genetic heritage in an irreversible way, inevitably affecting the human species as a whole. It is a dangerous intervention involving genetic engineering, which affects the whole of humanity, and cannot possibly be contained within the confines of the UK.

The greater part of the scientific community maintains that the scientific data currently available is insufficient to even consider intervention on human subjects, and there cannot therefore be any guarantee for the safety of any eventual offspring. It would, therefore, be wisest to adopt the precautionary principle — and stop.

As Italian parliamentarians we are profoundly alarmed and ask your parliamentarians to reflect again on the possible consequence of such an important decision, which does not concern just the citizens of your country, but the genetic patrimony of future generations.

EUGENIA ROCCELLA

Member of the Italian parliament and vice-president of the committee on health of the Chamber of Deputies
Plus a further 54 signatories who are members of the Chamber of Deputies, whose names can be seen at thetimes.co.uk/letters