

Creation of designer babies

Sir, I was concerned to read your report "No moral bar to creating designer babies, medical ethics body claims" (July 17). This indicated that the Nuffield Council on Bioethics had accepted the principle of creating genetically modified babies.

This would mean parents deciding on bringing only certain kinds of "good-quality" children into existence, and not others, who may be of "inferior biological quality".

Such a way of thinking, however, would imply that there is such a thing as a "life unworthy of life", which would undermine the concept of absolute equality in civilised society.

At present every member of society accepts that all human beings are equal in value and worth. Thus, nobody can say that anyone should not have existed. But by making sure certain persons do not come into existence, it would be possible to say that some individuals, who exist at present, should not have existed. There is no way around this conclusion.

DR CALUM MACKELLAR
Director of research, Scottish
Council on Human Bioethics,
Edinburgh