



Central Seminar Series 2009

Donation of Human Embryos to Stem Cell research: a view from the UK

Presented by

Sarah Franklin

Professor of Social Studies of Biomedicine
Associate Director, BIOS Centre
London School of Economics

Chaired by Associate Professor Sheryl de Lacey, Flinders University

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3.00pm – 4.00pm

Scots Centre (*next to Scots Church*)

Cnr North Terrace and Pulteney Street, Adelaide

Tissue donation in the reproductive setting raises unusual and in some respects unique issues for patients, professionals and regulators. These become more complex when, for example, IVF patients are asked to consider donating 'spare' or 'surplus' embryos to stem cell research, since any hES lines derived from their embryos are potentially immortal. Although the UK has devised consent procedures specific to this context of donation, many issues remain unresolved and are the subject of ongoing discussion, including conditional consent, donor screening, and feedback to patients. This presentation addresses these and other issues from an anthropological perspective that attempts also to engage with wider questions of the changing 'reproductive value' of human embryos now that they are increasingly used for regenerative purposes.

Sarah Franklin is Professor of Social Studies of Biomedicine and Acting Director of the BIOS Centre for the Study of Biomedicine, Bioscience and Society at the London School of Economics. Sarah has written and edited more than a dozen books on the social aspects of IVF, cloning, embryo research, and stem cells. Her book, published in May 2007, is titled 'Dolly Mixtures: The remaking of genealogy' which uses Dolly the sheep as an opportunity to begin developing a critical language to identify and evaluate the reproductive possibilities post-Dolly. Sarah works closely with clinicians and scientists in an attempt to widen sociological engagement with emerging issues in bioscience and biomedicine by developing collaborative partnerships with the professionals and communities, policy makers, and patient groups most closely involved in areas such as assisted conception, embryology, human embryonic stem cell derivation, and cloning.

RSVP essential to Vicki Hattam,
Centre Coordinator
vicki.hattam@unisa.edu.au

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