

Bioethics, Research on Human Beings, and Risks of Misuse

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Recent developments in biology and medicine predict the advent of a new era in the history of mankind. The new knowledge and interventions in the field of genetics, in particular, may have consequences for the individual human beings and the society that are difficult to imagine. The benefits of this development however come at a cost. The price to pay may be a change in the value that society attaches to human dignity, which may have far reaching consequences for the attitude towards human rights and welfare of the human being as an individual.

It is human embryo *in vitro* whose right to dignity and to life is increasingly encroached upon by the interest of the scientists and their sponsors. The creation of human embryos and cloned human beings for the purposes of research and therapy has become legally possible in some countries, leading to lawful instrumentalisation of human life. In addition, reproductive technology can now be misused in a number of novel, ethically controversial ways.

History of medicine and present developments offer convincing arguments in favour of insisting on societal control of ethics in science and in the application of new scientific knowledge. This is particularly important at the time when stakes and expectations invested in research on human beings are becoming increasingly high. So-called practical ethics regrettably does not stand in their way.