

Project Updates

December 2010

Work has been progressing rapidly since Ilke joined the project. She has been conducting a literature review mapping the socioethical issues, and presented preliminary material at the University of York in June and at the British Sociological Association's Medical Sociology Conference in September. She and Erica are writing a joint paper using this material with Professor Francoise Baylis of Dalhousie University, Canada. The IDARTSS steering committee met for the first time in July 2010 to discuss the work done thus far and provided advice and guidance on progress.

December 2011

Work in the second year of this project has focused on theoretical analyses of the literature surrounding the socio-ethical aspects of the uses of human reproductive tissue in stem cell, and other, research. In addition, Ilke conducted interviews with a number of individuals with practical and/or theoretical interests in these issues.

The analyses have been greatly assisted by the members of the international interdisciplinary steering group, which met for the second time in August 2011 and who, between them, cover a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and experience: Professor Christoph Rehmann-Sutter (scientist and ethicist), from Lübeck University Germany; Dr Robert Song (theologian) and Dr Shaun Pattinson (lawyer), both Durham University; and from Newcastle University, Dr Mary Herbert (embryologist), Dr Jackie Leach Scully (scientist and ethicist), Dr Ken Taylor (scientist and social researcher), and Dr Simon Woods (ethicist), as well as Ilke and Erica.

The project has also benefitted from contact with others in the PARTS International Research Network, most notably with Francoise Baylis of Dalhousie University, Canada who worked with Erica and colleagues to submit a successful bid for funding on the uses of eggs and embryos in research in Canada. Material from IDARTSS and Erica's associated projects, funded by the MRC and the Wellcome Trust, was presented at, and contributed to, a number of national and international meetings as detailed below.

Ilke's work on the project ended, after two years, at the end of December 2011 as she took up her Mildred Blaxter Fellowship from January 2012, but her input to IDARTSS continues in contributing to the writing of two major papers and to the activities of the PARTS International Research Network.

July 2012

Dr Ken Taylor joined the project in April 2012 following the completion of the Wellcome Trust funded project on embryo donation. Ken will draw on the IDARTSS literature review, transcripts of interviews and a range of other materials, to continue the development of the PARTS Principles. These will be an accessible set of practical guidelines, backed up by empirical evidence and philosophical argument, that represents current best practice in protecting the interests of the providers, acquirers and end users of human reproductive tissue (hRT). Voluntary adherence by researchers to such guidelines would be a step towards engendering public trust in the aims and conduct of scientific research.