

Ethical Issues in Surrogate Motherhood

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Abstract

Introduction: Assisted reproductive technology has greatly revolutionized chances of reproduction offered to infertile couples and it has helped them maintain their family integrity. This technology, like any other new medical technology, has brought up questions regarding its ethical goodness or badness. As its objectives, this article discusses the ethical issues regarding surrogate motherhood according to bioethical principles.

Materials & Methods: Autonomy is one of bioethical principles, which its implication in surrogacy is referred to as refraining from safe life style, prenatal care or refusal of giving the child to its genetic parents. Complete consultation by independent specialists for all the involved parties could maintain the individual's autonomy in giving voluntary informed consent to this technique and increase her commitment toward the desired responsibility in the contract. Other ethical principles, which are brought up in this process, are beneficence and non-maleficence. To regard these moral principles, all screening procedures and physical examinations should be practiced with utmost care to minimize any risk to the surrogate mother and the baby. Justice is another ethical issue which is observed in this technology. Surrogacy as a means of commercial profit is instrumentalization and exploitation of low-income women for the interest of high-income people. Establishing methods to control payment for surrogacy and making it an altruistic act, instead of a business, could help eliminate this unethical aspect.

Conclusion: Surrogacy could be an ethically acceptable and altruistic act for helping infertile couples if all ethical standards are practiced. Supervision of independent ethics committees is essential for assuring the fulfillment of these standards.

Key Words: Surrogate mother, Principles, Bioethics, Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Justice, Ethical issues, assisted reproductive techniques.

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