



# The New Bioethics

A Multidisciplinary Journal of Biotechnology and Genetic Ethics

ISSN: 2050-2877 (Print) 2050-2885 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ynbi20>

## Editorial

Trevor Stammers

To cite this article: Trevor Stammers (2015) Editorial, The New Bioethics, 21:1, 1-2, DOI: [10.1179/2050287715Z.00000000053](https://doi.org/10.1179/2050287715Z.00000000053)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1179/2050287715Z.00000000053>



Published online: 18 May 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 243



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## Editorial

Academic conferences are essential for the propagation of original ideas, the sharing of fresh insights, the recognition of hitherto unseen connections and open debate of controversies and disagreements both new and old. They are also the life blood of many academic journals including this one. Since I became its editor in 2011, this is the fourth issue of *The New Bioethics* which is largely comprised of papers arising from a single conference.

I am particularly grateful therefore to Prof. Michael A. Hayes, President of Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland, who has entrusted to us the selection of papers published in this edition from the symposium on *Ethics, Politics, and Health* hosted by the Department of Philosophy at MIC in November 2014 as part of the ‘President of Ireland’s Ethics Initiative’. President Michael D. Higgins’ hope for the conference was that the papers presented would ‘contribute to building more just and sustainable versions of Ireland’s future, and help establish an ethical dimension and discourse as key parts of our regulatory frameworks and our contribution to a wider European and global debate’. We are delighted and indeed honoured to make these available to a global audience as the president had hoped.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Niall Keane, Senior Lecturer and Head of Philosophy at Mary Immaculate College for being our guest editor for this volume, not only for his excellent work in collating and preparing the papers from the conference but also for his patience in the essential negotiations that bridge the presenting of papers in person at a conference and its final publication for a wider audience in a multidisciplinary journal such as *The New Bioethics*. To turn this around in a matter of a few months, alongside meeting the obligations of full time academic and management roles, is no easy task.

The journal editors are already in the early stages of engagement to publish papers from another conference to be held this summer and welcome readers who are either organising or speaking at conferences to approach *The New Bioethics* about potential collaboration either before or after the main conference event.

We of course continue to publish submissions of single original papers as well and are pleased to include three in this volume alongside the Irish conference selection. Two of these papers raise novel, or at the very least neglected, aspects and applications of autonomy. The potential and actual conflicts of maternal autonomy and fetal interests are invariably discussed in the context of induced abortion but not so frequently considered in relation to Caesarean section, probably because in the case of the latter, the value of the life of the as-yet unborn is not usually disputed or doubted by the mother. Yet there are still problematic areas which Brione raises. She concludes ‘Approaches to supporting autonomy in medicine need to be able to support complex and sensitive decision-making, incorporating reflection on the patient’s values and goals. This should involve deliberation in partnership between

physician and patient, allowing the patient to take responsibility for her decision'. We have to take ownership of decisions before we can take responsibility for them however and when patient and clinician disagree on the most appropriate mode of delivery the patient-doctor relationship will prove challenging for both parties.

Is the autonomy of either the patient or doctors just an ungrounded dogma anyway which we simply take for granted but on closer inspection proves illusory? Alistair Wardrope boldly challenges the ideology of autonomy in a controversial article in which he seeks to tease out what might characterise an 'autonomy *worthy of respect*'; in doing so of course he raises the spectre of other species of autonomy unworthy of respect. I anticipate (and encourage) readers' letters on that which we would be pleased to consider for publication.

**Trevor Stammers**  
*Editor, The New Bioethics*