



# The New Bioethics

A Multidisciplinary Journal of Biotechnology and the Body

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

## Atlantic Crossings

Trevor Stammers

To cite this article: Trevor Stammers (2017) Atlantic Crossings, The New Bioethics, 23:3, 193-194, DOI: [10.1080/20502877.2017.1400755](https://doi.org/10.1080/20502877.2017.1400755)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20502877.2017.1400755>



Published online: 13 Nov 2017.



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



Article views: 88



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## EDITORIAL

## Atlantic Crossings

*The New Bioethics* is an international journal but this is the first issue since I became editor that more than one paper in a single issue has been from the United States. This is a very welcome development and reflects the increasing American readership of the journal.

The first US paper from the University of Minnesota is a disturbing analysis of advertising practices of commercial egg-freezing services for women who are not known to be infertile but who wish to retain the option of fertility into later life when they have established their careers. However, since such clinics offering social egg freezing are not providing a strictly *medical* service, they are not bound by the more stringent professional regulations that cover infertility treatments for medical reasons; nevertheless Barbey considers that ‘there is still reason to be unsatisfied with their approach to advertising’. He finds that many of the assertions made in the publicity by social egg-freezing services are unsupported with appropriate references, and are often selective in the information given and ‘serve the clinic’s business purposes more than they serve a potential customer’s rational assessment of their need to utilize egg freezing to overcome fertility decline’. He concludes that whilst ‘social egg freezing may indeed provide psychological relief, the evidence that it ends up providing any material benefit is scant’.

The benefit of faecal microbiota transplant (FMT) for recurrent infection with *Clostridium Difficile* is however not in doubt, being 90% effective when repeat treatment is included. It is not surprising therefore that clinicians are keen to establish whether FMT is likely to be of benefit in other disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease. Woodworth *et al.* in their paper from Emory University in Atlanta discuss the ethics of clinical trials of FMT for possible new indications. They consider the risks versus benefits of the procedure, the inconsistency of the microbiome itself, changing FDA regulations and restrictions, concerns about the significance of results of microbiome sequencing and what should be and should not be communicated back to participants. They also discuss the potential conflicts of interest between various organisations involved in the process.

The ethics of full body transplants continues to exert a fascination for bioethicists, philosophers, theologians and clinicians alike. In an intriguing paper, philosopher Lantz Fleming Miller of the University of Twente in the Netherlands discusses the historical background to full body transplants, argues why despite its Frankensteinish aura the topic deserves serious consideration and looks at the short-term and longer-term ethical considerations should the procedure ever become possible.

Nicholson brings us back from speculation of the far future to the harsh realities of the lack of basic health care in the developing world today. He points to the lack of basic dental services in the poorest parts of the world and explores the ethical issue of ‘whether it is appropriate to use materials whose primary advantage is aesthetic when such materials are difficult to place and have limited durability’.

In the final paper of this issue, Saad revisits a rite of passage at the end of life which has come to be pretty much unquestioned — namely cremation. Though accepting its ecological benefits, Saad questions whether cremation has ethical shortcomings affecting both the dead and the communities of the living they leave behind.

The book reviews do not normally get a mention in an editorial but there is another first for the journal in this review section in this issue too. Sixth formers do not usually get a chance to be published in a peer-reviewed journal but who better to review a new book on bioethics for sixth formers and first year undergraduates than a sixth former? So, do read Bethan Lever’s review from a sixth former’s perspective of Willmot and Macip’s *Where Science and Ethics Meet: Dilemmas at the Frontiers of Medicine*. If her review is anything to go by, both she and the book should do very well in the next few years.

**Trevor Stammers**  
Editor-in-Chief  
St Mary’s University