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# Combining permissible abortion with prenatal testing: Risking Eugenics?

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## Abstract

**Session: Eugenics I & II (Double session. Part I, eugenic traits: Amir Teicher, Rob Wilson, Caroline Lyster. Part II, politics and eugenics: Judy Johns Schloegel, Aida Roige Mas, Gordon McOuat)** While abortion laws vary across the world, 56 countries currently permit the practice without restriction as to reason (Singh 2009). This permission, combined with the increasing availability and use of prenatal testing, creates the potential for the selective abortion in cases of disability. To allow this practice, I will argue, is to allow eugenics. Can we permit abortion in some cases and restrict it in others? I believe that we can, but the question will have to be addressed from several perspectives. First, I will examine the moral arguments to determine whether or not there is a morally relevant difference between abortions in general and the abortion of disabled fetuses in particular. Second, I will consider an important question related to policy: should selective abortion be prohibited in all cases, or are there certain diagnoses of disability where we think that termination may be permissible? I will also consider whether or not the consequences of a more restrictive policy place an undue burden on women who would seek abortion for reasons other than the results of a prenatal test. Finally, I will examine whether or not such a policy could be put into practice in Canada or the United States given the legal decisions that led to the unrestricted permissibility of abortion.

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