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Intro to Human Genetics

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The Issue of “Designer Babies”

The issue of “designer babies” is a controversial subject. Peter Braude, Susan Pickering, Frances Flinter and Caroline Mackie Ogilvie describe in their article, “Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD)” about this issue, including the techniques behind it. Through a scientific explanation, they describe the genetic reasoning behind how people can diagnose if their child will have a genetic disorder, and an explanation of conditions on why couples would choose to not continue with a pregnancy due to this factor. I believe it is understandable why a couple would choose to terminate a pregnancy in which the child would suffer a genetic disorder.

This issue is controversial because it interferes with various ethical and religious beliefs. It is understandable that people have this viewpoint; however, when one has the ability to prevent a genetic disorder from being passed down to future generations, these actions should be taken. Opponents of PGD also argue that this is a scientific action that supports a eugenic belief, in which we are trying to create a race without many flaws. Countering this argument, PGD should be regulated enough so that these actions do not occur. Rather, the purpose of designer babies is to prevent the passing down of genetic disorders to the infant.

Though this topic is very difficult for me to choose a perspective; the benefits outweigh the flaws of PGD. Being able to prevent a genetic disorder can result in a lesser struggle for

not only the parents, but also the child being born. The parents are given genetic counseling before PGD in order to fully understand the effects that a disorder may have on a child. The parents are also informed of alternative options of reproduction in order to make the decision whether PGD is necessary for them. I strongly agree that this education before the genetic testing is beneficial because it helps parents to contemplate what would be best for their future child.

PGD and the concept of designer babies made me think, would I want to have this done if I had the option before I had a child? My answer would probably be yes. I would like to know that I am bringing a healthy child into this world. However, even if I knew that my child would be at risk of obtaining a genetic disorder from either myself or my partner, I admit that I personally would have to continue with the pregnancy. Though, I completely understand others' decisions not to.

Works Cited

Braude, P., Pickering, S., Flinter, F., and Mackie Ogilvie, C. (2002). Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis. *Nature Reviews* **Volume 3**, 941-953.