Important issues also arise from recent developments in prenatal genetic testing. Since 2011, a new non-invasive prenatal test (NIPT) has been offered to pregnant women during the first trimester of pregnancy to screen for Downs Syndrome. It is a more reliable technique, safer for the fetus, and can be used earlier in pregnancy than the method previously used for this type of genetic testing, consisting of a simple maternal blood test. Some specialists in the field see these aspects, combined with business interests that favor the progress of NIPT into becoming a routine matter, may put greater pressure on women, who are hence left with the moral burden of deciding whether or not to accept the test without being well enough informed by medical staff to do so.[[1]](#footnote-1) Furthermore, the number of conditions NIPT can detect is gradually increasing and it should soon be able to provide a wide range of fetal genetic information. Whether the ability to obtain a greater amount of genetic information about the fetus is a positive development from the point of view of the individual and society is questionable, however. To what extent does a pregnant woman have the right not to be informed as to the likelihood of their fetus having atypical genes? At the societal level, could prenatal genetic screening be said to encourage the practise of eugenics?

1. Ravitsky, Vardit (2017), “The shifting landscape of prenatal testing: Between reproductive autonomy and public health”, *Hastings Center Report*, 47 Suppl. 3: S34-S40. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)