Technology and Ethics Sample Translation

Important issues are also raised by recent developments in the field of prenatal genetic testing. Since 2011, a new, noninvasive prenatal test (NIPT) is offered to pregnant women during the first trimester of pregnancy in order to detect Down syndrome. Using only a blood sample from the mother, this technique is more reliable, safer for the fetus, and able to be used earlier in the pregnancy than the method previously used for this type of genetic screening. According to some specialists, these features, combined with commercial interests that promote the routinization of NIPT, run the risk of putting increased pressure on women, who end up with the moral burden of deciding whether or not to agree to having this test performed, without always being well informed by the medical staff when making this decision.[[1]](#footnote-2) In addition, the number of conditions that NIPT can detect is steadily increasing, which means that it should soon be able to provide a wide range of genetic information about the fetus. This raises questions such as whether the possibility of obtaining increasing amounts of genetic information about the fetus is a positive development from the individual and societal points of view. To what extent are the rights of pregnant women being protected when it comes to their right to not be informed about the probability that their fetus carries atypical genetic conditions? On the societal scale, isn’t prenatal genetic screening encouraging eugenics?

1. Ravitsky, V., 2017, “The shifting landscape of prenatal testing: Between reproductive autonomy and public health,” *Hastings Center Report*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)