Provoking Thought and Discussion

The point-counterpoint format of this edition of NeoReviews seemed most accommodating of the topic “The Ethics of In Vitro Fertilization.” As Coeditor, it is apparent to me that some topics cannot be covered sufficiently by simple, straightforward exposition, as if it were only a matter of ensuring completeness of the review for the readership to be informed satisfactorily. In fact, some topics by their nature are not likely to generate much satisfaction. Instead, they may perturb and provoke readers to consider their complexity and reliance on scientific evidence and even personal beliefs. The latter often hold as much weight in dialogue as information resulting from the interpretation of scientific experimentation.

As practitioners of neonatal medicine, we need to be aware of intersections between scientific evidence and beliefs and be prepared to recognize them in our communications with the parents of our patients and each other. We must be cognizant that actions may be informed ambiguously, yet remain decisive. The point-counterpoint format is conducive to exposing ambiguity and reminding us that many truths can coexist in dialogue, not always restfully. Moreover, education is not always coincident with knowing what is right or knowing everything that can be known.

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