



Joint Centre for Bioethics
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BIOETHICS SEMINAR

May 11, 2016, 4:10-5:30 pm

155 College St., Room 106 (main floor, to the right of the elevators)

This event will be webcast:

<https://jcb.adobeconnect.com/bioethicsseminars/>

Let's Talk about Sex, Baby: The Ethics of Decision Making About Pediatric Fertility Preservation

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Abstract: Experimental fertility preservation technologies, such as ovarian and testicular tissue cryopreservation, aim to preserve the future option of genetic reproduction by removing, freezing, and storing reproductive materials for future use. In the pediatric cancer context, decision making about the fertility preservation is challenging, in part, because parents must serve as proxy decision makers for their children. Despite guidelines stipulating that children be involved in medical decision making to the extent dictated by their capacities, children's involvement in fertility preservation discussions and procedures is controversial. Some adults worry that children who are involved in decision making about fertility preservation are at risk of "sexualization" because of these discussions involve information about sexual health and reproduction. Using a feminist relational lens, I examine the nature and scope of this so-called risk of sexualization. I argue that the perceived risk of sexualization actually represents two separate ethical concerns, namely concerns about children's (present) sexual agency and concerns about children's (present and future) reproductive agency. I maintain that concerns about sexual agency should not be a barrier to children's involvement in fertility preservation decision making, however, concerns about children's reproductive agency in the context of fertility preservation warrant further examination.

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A partnership among the University of Toronto; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab; The Hospital for Sick Children; Humber River Hospital; Mount Sinai Hospital; Toronto Community Care Access Centre; Trillium Health Partners; and University Health Network (Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, and Toronto Western Hospital).