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Media Release

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Gender-selection fraught with problems

Toi te Taiao - The Bioethics Council is naïve in thinking that gender-selection won't harm girl babies.

It is a major demographic problem in China and India, and already there are reports from the United States that some immigrants are using pre-birth testing and abortion to reflect a cultural preference for boys.

However well intentioned the Council may be, in its efforts to assist couples who want a boy or girl to give some balance to their families, the potential for abuse of pre-birth technology is as likely here in New Zealand as is the practice internationally.

The British experience under the National Health Service illustrates how quickly the overriding practice becomes "search and destroy."

While clinic administrators take pride in their detection and analysis rates, parents have reported finding themselves under enormous pressure to take the 'socially acceptable' option if any disability is identified – abortion.

While the Council recommends that, 'when making decisions, parents should have access to advice and counselling that is unbiased, non-directive and includes medical and non-medical information,' the reality is that few challenge the medical information they are given.

There are many accounts of parents resisting the pressure to terminate their pregnancy after a 'positive result' and going on to deliver healthy babies. Regrettably, for those parents learning that the child they are expecting may be disabled, what is seldom mentioned is the existence of support groups and how they might find help.

ENDS

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Media Commentator

Bernard Moran

for a secular perspective on Life Issues



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Commentary expertise

- Life issues from a pro-life perspective
- The Unborn and the advocacy of human rights
- Abortion and late-termination of pregnancy
- Post-abortion trauma and counselling services
- Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide
- Bioethics – stem cell research, pre-birth testing and reproductive technologies

Background

Bernard Moran is an Auckland-based journalist with over 30 year's experience and holds the position of Communications Manager for *Voice For Life Inc.*

Voice For Life is New Zealand's largest secular, pro-life organisation, with 42 branches throughout the country. *Voice For Life* has five areas of priority about which it speaks:

- The Unborn – speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves on abortion
- Women's Health – advocating for informed consent
- Families – recognising the role of family in society
- The old or infirm – seeing the dignity at all stages of human life
- Bioethics – taking an ethical approach to bio-technology

His work with *Voice For Life* has included preparing submissions to parliamentary Select Committees, speaking at conferences in New Zealand and internationally. His commentary experience includes a secular pro-life perspective on abortion, euthanasia, the issues which limit informed consent in medical and surgical procedures and bioethics.

Please contact *Voice For Life* for a secular pro-life perspective on Life Issues in New Zealand.



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