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Call for Papers

Call 1

Families in the Age of Reproductive Medicine

The conditions for founding a family and transitioning to parenthood have changed significantly in past decades. In this regard, the developments in the range of reproductive medicine have played an important part. Since the first birth following artificial insemination in 1978, the procedures of reproductive medicine have established themselves in the area of the wish to have a child. Worldwide, more than five million children have been born following reproductive medicine treatment.

Not only the „if“, „when“ and „how“ of founding a family, but also the constellation of parenthood have become negotiable and increasingly more individually and diversely customisable. For example, since the introduction of the birth control pill in 1961, sexuality between men and women has been able to be disassociated from its purely reproductive function. At the same time, the offer of reproductive medicine makes it possible to fulfil the wish to have a child even when no child can be conceived in the natural way (any more). For one thing, reproductive medicine treatments are carried out when there is a naturally occurring fertility disorder. In addition to this, however, they are also implemented in the case of age-related fertility restrictions or when the way of life makes it impossible to conceive children naturally, e.g., when same-sex couples or singles wish to have a child. In the context of sperm, egg or embryo donation, new constellations of family, sibling relationships and parenthood emerge. These go hand-in-hand with a new variety of family forms.

The organisation of family in the age of reproductive medicine is not only characterised by a great dynamism, but also demands an interdisciplinary approach, as well as reflection with regard to the legal, ethical, social and cultural environment of the family. In this context, the issues differ dependent upon the extent of the reproductive medicine treatment, the degree of third-party involvement, the desired family form and the experience of both parents and children.

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