

Disability, Bioethics, and Human Rights

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Neurology Auditorium,
The Neurological Institute of New York
710 West 168th Street, First Floor,
New York, NY 10032

This lecture outlined the challenges to traditional bioethics and medicine that have been raised by those within and outside of bioethics and medicine who view disability as principally a social and not a medical problem.

Imagine that the major life issues for someone who has Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, ALS, Parkinson's disease, or dementia are potentially remediable by changes in attitudes and institutions to better respect and include all members of the community.

How might bioethics and medicine change their enthusiasm for pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, selective abortion, ending treatment for premature infants, withdrawing life support from people with non-terminal conditions, and allocating scarce and expensive medical resources based on judgments of quality of life?

What recommendations for training of health professionals and bioethicists flow from a social approach to issues of disease, chronic illness, and disability?

These are the topics that Adrienne Asch explored in her talk. Most important was the interaction with the audience during questions following the lecture.