Anne McLaren Memorial Fund

Public Discussion

Which career first? - planning family and career

Wednesday 10th March 2010, 5.30pm
Yusuf Hamied Theatre, Christ's College, Cambridge

Speakers: Susan Bewley, Melanie Davies
Panellists: Irenee Daly, Carrie Friese
Chair: Sarah Franklin

Many young people now delay child-bearing to fit with education & career aspirations.
BUT fertility declines with age in both men and women.

What are the facts?
What are the treatments?
Can fertility decline be prevented or circumvented?

Melanie Davies & Susan Bewley are Oxfbridge-educated obstetricians & gynaecologists working at academic health science centres in London (University College Hospital & Guy's & St. Thomas' Hospital). They specialise in ovarian infertility and complex high-risk pregnancies respectively. In 2005 they caused a sensation with their BMJ editorial “Which career first?” [Vol.331, pp588-9] where they described reproductive ageing as a public health problem. To mark International Women's Day, they will explore some of the medical aspects and consequences of the modern phenomenon of fertility deferment amongst women.

Then the floor will be open to questions and discussion as to how young women (and men) might face these issues, and can (or can’t) plan success with careers and families. Panel discussants are Irenee Daly (a PhD student in the Centre for Family Research, Cambridge, working on women’s awareness of age-related fertility decline) and Carrie Friese (LSE, who has worked on attitudes of women, who used donor eggs, towards the pressures of reproductive ageing). The chair will be Sarah Franklin (LSE, writer of several books on the impact and significance of reproductive technologies).

Anne McLaren (1927-2007) a distinguished scientist, teacher, and mentor and encourager of young and unconventional talent - especially in women – was also a fellow commoner of Christ’s College. She was a founder of the Association of Women in Science and Engineering, and its President for many years. She was active internationally in the application of basic reproductive knowledge to the fields of contraception, fertility regulation, infertility treatment and the prevention of HIV infection. Anne was Foreign Secretary and Vice President of the Royal Society – the first woman to hold office (1991-1996). Her friends, colleagues and family established this fund in her memory to mark her many contributions.

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