

International research symposium

GLOBALISATION AND COMMODIFICATION OF THE HUMAN BODY: A CANNIBAL MARKET?

(Geneva, 6 and 7th February 2014)



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The use of new biomedical technologies has led to, among other factors, an increase in demand for health care. However, for economic, legal or ethical reasons, or due to human resources shortages, public health services in developed countries cannot respond to this growing demand, leaving the needs of some patients unmet.

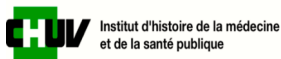
Liberalisation of the international healthcare market and rationalisation of public health expenditure over the past twenty years have resulted in two fundamental changes in the organisation of healthcare services at a global level. On the one hand, some emerging countries have developed private, highly specialised health services particularly designed to meet foreign demand at low cost. This new type of medical supply has a growing influence on the behaviour of patients who are more and more willing to go abroad for treatment. On the other hand, liberalisation has allowed greater workforce mobility, allowing health professionals in poor regions to look for better-paid jobs outside their countries. This double movement of health professionals and patients is one of the most noteworthy features of the new globalised healthcare industry.

Travelling for medical care, known as medical tourism, has recently grown in fields such as oncology, cardiovascular surgery, medically assisted reproduction, and organ/tissue transplantation. In the last two of these fields, development of medical services is supported in some countries by flexible legislation and the existence of a large number of socially vulnerable people. The result is a wide availability of low-cost resources needed for specific treatments (organs, human material, surrogate mothers, etc.). Human body parts of socially disadvantaged persons are rented or purchased on a more or less legal basis in order to meet the needs of patients who can afford the costs of those medical services. Commodification of human body parts is another feature of the

global healthcare market. A new type of trade based on increasing social inequalities in most societies and between countries is developing. The result is an economy that is comparable not only to a neo-colonial one, but also to a kind of cannibal market.

An international and multidisciplinary symposium will take place in Geneva, Switzerland on February 6-7, 2014 in order to better understand various aspects of this new market and assess its implications for the future. Its major objectives are: (i) to analyse, from a social sciences perspective, the globalised development of the commodification of the human body for medical purposes; (ii) to develop the outline of a research agenda based on key ideas and findings that emerge from the discussions; and (iii) to create an international network of social scientists on this topic. The discussions will be based on four case studies: (a) the unregulated market of assisted reproduction technology and in particular the development of commercial surrogacy; (b) the conditions for organ harvesting that feeds the market for transplantation; (c) the "brain drain" of health professionals which reduces the capacity of poor countries to respond to their health challenges; and (d) the development of private institutions that collect, store and sell human material (gametes, embryos, blood, tissues, etc.). These represent the four areas in which the growth of this market has significant human, social, medical, economic, legal, religious and ethical implications.

The Symposium is organised by the Institute for Global Studies, Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (FMSH), Paris, with the generous support of: the Brocher Foundation, Geneva, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, Basel, the National Fund for Scientific Research, Brussels, the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences, Brussels, the Institute of History of Medicine and Public Health, Lausanne, the Center of studies on international cooperation and development (CECID), ULB, Brussels and the Institute for Biomedical Ethics, Geneva.



Thursday 6 February

09:00/10:30. Opening session

Chairperson: **Pr. Yvon Englert**, Dean of the Medical Faculty, Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Chairman of the scientific committee of the Fondation Brocher.

- **Pr. Michel Wieviorka**, Director of the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.
- **Pr. Philippe Goyens**, Permanent secretary of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences, Brussels.
- Introduction: "Globalisation and commodification of the human body: a cannibal market?". **Pr. Jean-Daniel Rainhorn**, Institute for Global Studies, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.

10:30/11:00. Coffee Break

11:00/12:30. Panel 1: "Trading in human body: historical, ethical, and religious perspectives"

Chairperson: **Prof. Vincent Barras**, Director of the Institute of History of Medicine and Public Health, University of Lausanne.

- "The commodification of the Human Body. A Brief History of a Long Genealogy". **Prof. Jean-Jacques Courtine**, European studies, University of Auckland.
- "The ethics of selling body parts: a problem larger than mere commodification". **Prof. Samia Hurst**, Institute for biomedical ethics, University of Geneva.
- "Commodification of the human body and religions". **Dr. Samira El Boudamoussi**, Institute for Global Studies, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris and CECID, Université libre de Bruxelles.

12:30. Welcome address. **Pr. Jean-Dominique Vassalli**, Rector of the University of Geneva, Chairman of the Brocher Foundation.

12:30/14:00. Lunch

14:00/16:00. Panel 2: "Wombs for rent: case studies"

Chairperson: **Prof. René Frydman**, Institute for Global Studies, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.

- "Birthing A Market - Commercial Surrogacy In India: An Exploratory Study". **Sarojini Nadimpally**, Sama Resource Group for Women And Health, New Delhi.
- "A Womb for Rent: "within me, but not mine" The Surrogacy in Israel: Vision, Policy and Reality". **Etti Samama**, Faculty of Health Systems Management, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Director of the division of medical technology policy, Ministry of Health, Israel.

- "Race to the Bottom: Analyzing California's Permissive Surrogacy Laws". **Prof. Seema Mohapatra**, School of law, Barry University, Orlando.
- "Baby tourism and global social inequality". **Prof. Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim**, Institute for Social Sciences, Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen-Nürnberg

16:00/16:30. Coffee Break

16:30/18:00. Panel 3: "Looting of brains: impact on health, equity and ethics"

Chairperson: **Prof. Alexandre Mauron**, Institute for biomedical ethics, University of Geneva.

- "Medical tourism, health coverage and brain drain in Southeast Asia - implications for health equity". **Dr. Nicola Pocock**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and National University of Singapore.
- "An Unfair Trade? Mobility and Brain Drain of Africa's health professionals ". **Dr. Delanyo Dovlo**, World Health Organisation, Kigali.
- "Nurse Importation by Developed Nations: Global Health Consequences and Policy Considerations ". **Prof. Barbara Brush**, The Carol J. and F. Edward Lake Professor of Nursing in Population Health, The University of Michigan School of Nursing, Michigan.

Friday 7 February

08:30/10:30. Panel 4: "Organs for sale"

Chairperson: **Prof. Philippe Steiner**, GEMASS, University Paris-Sorbonne, Paris.

- "An Overview of Worldwide Transplant Tourism". **Prof. Jacob Akoh**, Consultant General & Transplant Surgeon, Associate Professor of Surgery Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Derriford Hospital, Plymouth.
- "Strategies to prevent transplant tourism in Latin America: The Spanish experience". **Dr. Raphael Matesanz**, Director of the Spanish National Transplant Organisation, Madrid.
- "Compensated living unrelated donation in Iran". **Prof. Mitra Mahdavi-Mazdeh**, Imam Khomeini hospital, Tehran University of Medical Sciences.
- "The battle for organs anno 2014: lessons learned from fieldwork research". **Frederike Ambagtsheer**, coordinator of the HOTT project and of ELPAT, Erasmus MC University Hospital Rotterdam, Dpt. Internal Medicine, Section Transplantation & Nephrology, Rotterdam.

10:30/11:00. Coffee Break

11h00/12h30. Panel 5: "The human product banking industry"

Chairperson: **Prof. Nguyen Vinh Kim**, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Montreal and Institute for Global Studies, Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris.

- "Ethics and transfusion medicine". **Prof. Jean-Daniel Tissot**, Regional Blood Transfusion Service, Lausanne.
- "Commodification, cannibalism and context: UK women's experiences of providing eggs for research". **Prof. Erica Haines**, PEALS Research Centre, University of Newcastle.
- "The commercialization of human cells and tissues". **Dr. Jean-Paul Pirnay**, Human cells and tissues banks, Queen Astrid military hospital, Brussels.

13h30/15h00. Panel 6: "Key issues for research"

Chairperson: **Prof. Philippe Goyens**, Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences, Brussels.

- "Is Commodification of the Human Body a Gender Issue?". **Prof. Judit Sandor**, Central European University, Budapest.
- "Advancing a Human Rights Approach to Human Trafficking for Organ Removal". **Prof. Debra Budiani-Saberi**, Center for bioethics, Pennsylvania University.
- "From colonization to neocolonization: commodification of human body as a new form of exploitation of international inequalities?". **Prof. Firouzeh Nahavandi**, CECID, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels.

15:00/15:30. Coffee Break

15:30/17:00. Panel 7: "Key questions for the future"

Chairperson: **Dr. Marie Paule Kiény** (Assistant Director General, Health systems and innovation), World Health Organisation, Geneva.

- "The Response of International Law and its Challenges". **Prof. Carmel Shalev**, Haifa University, Haifa.
- "Principles for an ethical market". **Prof. Olivier Bouin**, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.
- "The exception of medical products of human origin". **Dr. L. Noel**, World Health Organisation, Geneva.

17h00/17:30. Concluding remarks. **Prof. Nancy Scheper-Hughes**, Professor of Medical Anthropology and Sociocultural Anthropology. University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley.

The symposium is an exclusive meeting for specialists in medical and social sciences. In order to participate, please fill in the pre-registration form at <http://www.brocher.ch>