ONPRC Module 6: How do ethicists, doctors, researchers decide if oncofertility treatments are ethical?

Oncofertility Ethics: Real-life Case Studies
What would you do?

Case #1:
Married woman, 36 years, metastatic colon cancer, has expected 20 month survival, currently on chemotherapy, but wants IVF and pregnancy, husband is not sure he wants a baby, oncologist doesn't want to stop chemotherapy to collect oocytes.

Questions:
1. Should she be able to stop chemo to collect oocytes and do IVF?

2. Why or why not?

Case #2:
16-year old girl dying of tumor, an only child, parents want to cryopreserve her ovaries for the chance at having her grandchildren; the girl is willing but not enthusiastic.

Questions:
1. Who do you think is responsible for making this decision, the parents or their daughter?

2. Issues to consider:
   Who would be responsible for her tissue if her parents died?
   Who would be the "partner" for the future, potential oocytes?

3. What if the girl was 9 or 10?

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Other Cases to consider:
(from Dr. Laurie Zoloth, Center for Bioethics, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University)

- ❖ **Dorothy has cancer, and she is 25 and married but not certain she wants children, but her husband does.**

- ❖ **Alison has cancer, is 38 and unmarried, wants her "own genetic child" someday.**

- ❖ **Rachel is 15, has cancer and consents to the procedure but her parents do not approve of the idea.**

- ❖ **Lily is an older med student who wants to be a neurosurgeon.**

- ❖ **Regina is a highly paid supermodel.**

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Questions to Think About:

Is doing oncofertility research a good idea?

Is it fair to ask patients to participate when we don't know how it will turn out?

Are there reasons in principle to say no?

Is America a fair and safe place to do the research?

Are there some ideas that are ok, but some that are wrong?

How do you decide what is right when we all disagree?

Should only scientists decide, or everybody?

Students Notes or Questions:

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