

RES-350-27-0004 (Kent)
Regenerating Bodies

This one year fellowship enabled the fellow to achieve all the principal objectives which were to synthesise and consolidate findings from two ESRC funded projects, one on the regulation and governance of tissue engineering in the UK and Europe, the other on the collection and use of fetal stem cells; to build capacity for future international collaborative work around abortion and stem cell science and the international dynamics of regulation and governance of the use of fetal stem cells in Europe; and to promote dialogue within and between the social science, bioscience and clinical community.

This was achieved through the preparation of a monograph which revisits and draws on existing data from the two previous projects. The book explores the commodification of human tissues and cells within new tissue economies. It considers the extent to which regenerative medicine represents a paradigm shift and the dynamics of innovation in tissue engineering and stem cell science. A focus on recent policy debates and legislative developments in Europe and the UK highlights the relationship between ethics and regulation and how ethical concerns have played out in these policy arenas. Finally it offers a gender analysis of emerging tissue and cell based technologies. In two separate papers the author develops an analysis of 'the fetal tissue economy' as a particular and distinctive form of tissue exchange and identifies an area of future research.

International links and new collaborations have been developed through a combination of study visits to the Universities of Lund, Copenhagen and Paris; attendance at the European Sociology Association international conference; network building with social science, clinical and bioscience communities; and hosting an international visiting fellowship from the USA. This has led to new initiatives that will take forward the fellow's programme of research. An international workshop on the implementation of the European Tissue and Cells Directive is planned for March 2009 at the University of Copenhagen. A study of embryo and fetal tissue collection in France is planned. The fellow is an associate partner in a proposed Marie Curie Initial Training Network (co-ordinated by the University of Bristol) that will provide training in ethics, neuroscience and stem cell science for PhD students. The fellow is also a collaborator on a proposed project on ethics and tissue engineering design based in the Netherlands and led by the University of Maastricht.

The fellow convened a highly successful interdisciplinary seminar series on 'Regenerative Bodies' at the University of the West of England, Bristol, which attracted a wide audience. The seminars covered a number of themes: the ethics of sourcing and donating human tissues, the development of new scientific knowledge in embryology and stem cell science, regulation and governance of new health technologies and commercialization of regenerative medicine. The speakers during the series were from the UK and US and included bioscientists, a nurse researcher, anthropologist, regulator and social scientists provoking lively and productive discussions at each event. Seminar participants included: nurses and health professionals, clinicians, social scientists, policy makers, health care providers,

ethicists and biomedical scientists. The seminar series established links within the South West region especially with the Centre for Regenerative Medicine at the University of Bath, the industry body 'Bioapproaches', and the Faculty of Health & Social Care, UWE.

In addition the fellow participated in two expert workshops the first, at Kings College London in September 2007 and hosted by the Centre for Biomedicine and Society was on the links between the academy and industry in stem cell science. The second was a workshop hosted by the Institute of Manufacturing, Centre for Economics & Policy, University of Cambridge held in London in November 2007 as part of the REMEDI programme which explored the obstacles to commercialization and brought together experts to discuss policy and strategy. In June 2008 the fellow co-convened and was a speaker at a workshop at EGENIS (University of Exeter) on 'Cellular Spaces' and has built stronger links with the stem cell research group there.

Finally the fellow was invited to become a member of the MHRA Medical Device Technology Topic Selection Panel which has been set up to advise MHRA on new areas of policy and regulation. She also contributed to the preparation of a briefing to Parliament on stem cells, was a speaker at the annual Medical Sociology Conference and attended meetings relating to the regulatory activities of the UK Human Tissue Authority meeting.

In sum all objectives were achieved and the year has enabled the fellow to establish a firm foundation for future work and have a significant impact on developments in the field.