



PhD Opportunity in Biomedical Ethics

The Institute for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Basel (IBMB), Switzerland (<http://ibmb.unibas.ch/>), is dedicated to research and teaching of biomedical ethics at the Medical and Science Faculties. At the IBMB, we are looking for one full-time PhD student as part of an SNSF-FWO-funded project (Family Building at Advanced Parental Age: An Interdisciplinary Approach). The project is a collaboration with the Bioethics Institute at the University of Ghent (Belgium). The candidate will closely collaborate with a post-doc and two researchers and a (co-)supervisor who works at the University of Ghent.

Position: PhD student

Employment starting time: July or August 2021

Length of PhD Program: 3-4 years (full-time)

PhD Salary: In accordance with SNSF doctoral salary guidelines

Qualifications:

- Master's degree in philosophy, law, bioethics, medicine, science or other related fields.
- Excellent language skills in English and German
- Ability to speak and understand French is highly desirable.
- Interest to contribute towards an empirical project as part of a team.
- Outstanding Master's and Bachelor's academic grades.
- Enthusiasm, responsibility and interest in an academic career.
- Ability to implement an already designed research project.
- Ability to respect deadlines

We offer:

- Enrolment in a Swiss Bologna accredited PhD Program in Bioethics, Health Policy and Legal medicine.
- Student will complete empirical methods courses as part of the PhD Program in order to successfully conduct their PhD Project.
- Student will also have the possibility to contribute to the academic life at the IBMB, including contributions to teaching, as well as collaborations in other research projects and academic publications in peer reviewed journals.

Project Information:

Families with parents of Advanced Parental Age (APA) are becoming more and more common; a trend that has raised serious concerns for several reasons. APA is typically advised against as it is assumed that older parents will not be able to fulfil their parental duties. Older parenthood is associated with medical complications for the mother and for the child and an increase in the use of medical assistance to conceive. Key principles, such as the principle of reproductive autonomy (the right of a person to decide for her or himself when, how, etc. (s)he plans to reproduce) and the welfare of the child (which is the main argument used to restrict parental autonomy in reproduction) will need to be balanced against other values and must be understood in a setting of normative ideas.

The overall goal of the project is to create a strong and coherent normative framework about responsible family building at an advanced age: >40 years old for at least one of the parents. This normative

framework, that is empirically informed, will help to design recommendations for clinical practice and policy making. To examine how age is used as a factor in decisions and moral reasoning about reproduction in two contexts: natural conception and reproductive medicine, we will critically analyse the validity and acceptability of widely accepted ethical principles and guidelines as well as the stakeholders' convictions. The study will examine what defines a 'good' parent, which characteristics describe such a 'good' parent; and what are the minimal standards for parental competence. Special attention will be given to questions of justice and the presence of double moral standards in restrictions on women's and men's possibilities to procreate at an older age.

The PhD student will work as part of a team to conduct an explorative study of the normative and empirical literature, as well as a qualitative interview study capturing the experiences of stakeholders and their moral views concerning responsible parenthood in relation to advanced aged parents.

How to Apply: Applications must be submitted in English and should include in a single PDF file: (1) A detailed CV, including an overview of study results (grades), the title of your master thesis, contact information of (at least) two (academic) referees, and a PDF-file of the master thesis; (2) A motivation letter (maximum two pages, double-spaced, font 12), specifying your interests in the topic of advanced parental age and in conducting a PhD at the University of Basel.

Applications should be sent via email directly to Dr. Eva de Clercq (eva.declercq@unibas.ch), with email subject "PhD positions SNSF-FWO-2021-2024", by April 30th, 2021. After an initial screening, interviews will take place with top five candidates via Zoom or Skype. Interviews will start from 5th of May 2021.

Environment: The University of Basel is the oldest Swiss university with a long tradition in ethics and the humanities. It has a long-standing reputation in outstanding research and teaching. Doctoral candidates at the University come from many international countries providing a vibrant and rich community. More information about the University is available at <https://www.unibas.ch/en/University/About-University.html>. The city of Basel is a global centre for biomedical research with major academic institutions and research departments of leading life science companies. Basel is a multicultural city and ranks among the best in terms of quality of life.