Genetic screening of embryos thwarts disease and creates ethical questions

Genetic testing of embryos has been around for more than a decade, but its use has soared in recent years as methods have improved and more disease-causing genes have been discovered. The in vitro fertilization and testing are expensive — typically about $20,000 — but they make it possible for couples to ensure that their children will not inherit a faulty gene and to avoid the difficult choice of whether to abort a pregnancy if testing of a fetus detects a genetic problem.

But the procedure also raises unsettling ethical questions that trouble advocates for the disabled and have left some doctors struggling with what they should tell their patients. When are prospective parents justified in discarding embryos? Is it acceptable, for example, for diseases like GSS, that develop in adulthood? What if a gene only increases the risk of a disease?

Read the full, original story: Ethics Questions Arise as Genetic Testing of Embryos Increases

Additional Resources:

- Gene tool delivers healthy babies to mom with fatal disease, NBC News
- First baby born after full genetic screening of embryos, New Scientist
- Finding a Doctor Who Supports Genetic Screening During I.V.F., New York Times