For modern parents, how to weigh pros and cons of sequencing baby's genome

At 31 years old, not a day goes by without overhearing one of my friends discuss the pros and cons of breast versus bottle, one buggy over another. Before long the topic may be to sequence or not to sequence.

Starting in April, parents in Boston will have the opportunity to take part in the BabySeq trial and have their baby's genetic future analysed and entered into their medical records. In doing so, the child's parents will find out if their infant is at risk of a range of medical conditions, some of which might be preventable.

It sounds like a good idea, an extension of the heel prick test that newborns already receive. But sequencing has the potential to reveal much more as time goes on and our knowledge of the genome increases – both about medical conditions and other traits.

"People will propose a number of disturbing scenarios," says co-leader of the trial, Robert Green at Harvard Medical School. "For example, could a parent discover something that makes them treat the child differently, or could a child grow up and face discrimination because of having certain gene mutations in their medical records?"

As a woman of child-bearing age, I'm certainly interested in technology that might help prevent any future child suffering with a preventable condition. The problem with genetic screening is that the results are never black and white.

Read full, original article: Would I have the genome of my baby sequenced?