

Gene therapy tourism on the rise as debate heightens over reproductive technologies

One of [the] unintended consequences [of regulating, prohibiting or authorizing the use of new technologies] is “medical tourism,” where people travel from their home countries to places where practices such as commercial surrogacy or embryo selection are allowed.

Medical tourism for assisted reproductive technologies raises a host of legal and ethical questions. While new reproductive technologies, like mitochondrial replacement, promise to bring significant benefits, the absence of regulations means that some of these questions, including those related to safety and risks are unanswered, even as people are starting to use them.

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Mitochondrial replacement is done in a lab, as part of in vitro fertilization. It works by “substituting” the defective mitochondria of the mother’s egg with healthy mitochondria obtained from a donor. The child is genetically related to the mother, but has the donor’s mitochondrial DNA.

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The increasing trend of medical tourism has been followed by sporadic [scandals](#) and waves of tighter regulations in countries such as [India](#), [Nepal](#) and [Thailand](#), which have been leading destinations of couples seeking assisted reproduction services.

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Regulatory authorities around the world are [debating](#) how to better regulate these genetic modification technologies. Governments need to start considering not only the ethical and safety effects of their choices but also how these choices drive medical tourism.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The next frontier in reproductive tourism? Genetic modification](#)