

## CURRICULUM VITAE

# Heidi Mertes

### Contact

Heidi Mertes, PhD

Bioethics Institute Ghent (BIG)

Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences

Ghent University

Blandijnberg 2

9000 Ghent

Belgium

[Heidi.Mertes@UGent.be](mailto:Heidi.Mertes@UGent.be)

### Current position

Professor, Lecturer in ethics at Ghent University (30%)

Postdoctoral research fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders (70%)

Title of research project: “Ethical challenges in prenatal genomics”

### Employment

Oct 2014 – current	Lecturer in ethics at Ghent University (30%)
Oct 2014 – current	postdoctoral research fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders (70%)
Oct 2010 – Sep 2014	postdoctoral research fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders
Oct 2009 – Sep 2010	doctor-assistant at Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
Mar 2005 – Feb 2009	researcher at Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
May 2003 – Feb 2005	translator at Universal Computer Systems, Houston TX, USA

Jan 2002 – Jun 2002                      researcher at Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

### **Education / Degrees**

May 2009                      **PhD in Moral Sciences (Ethics)**  
Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium  
Title dissertation: “The interaction between science and ethics in the debate concerning stem cell research”

July 2002                      **Teaching degree in Moral Sciences**  
Cum laude  
Department of Pedagogy, Ghent University, Belgium

July 2001                      **Master’s degree in Moral Sciences – Moral Counseling**  
Magna cum laude  
Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium  
Title dissertation: “Zingeving vanuit een vrijzinnig perspectief” (in Dutch, free translation: “The meaning of life from a secular perspective”)

July 1999                      **Bachelor’s degree in Moral Sciences**  
Cum laude  
Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium

July 1997                      **High school degree**  
Sint-Jan-Berchmanscollege, Westmalle, Belgium

### **Grants**

2014 - 2017      Post-doctoral research fellowship Research Foundation – Flanders  
2010 - 2014      Post-doctoral research fellowship Research Foundation – Flanders  
2009 - 2010      Post-doctoral research fellowship Special Research Fund of Ghent University

### **Publications**

permanent link to publications: <http://lib.ugent.be/bibliografie/801001621876>

### Articles in international peer-reviewed journals

Mertes H and Pennings G. Modification of the embryo’s genome: more useful in research than in the clinic. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 2015;15(12):52-53.

- Zoll M, Mertes H and Gupta J. Corporate giants provide fertility benefits: have they got it wrong? *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* 2015;195:A1-A2.
- Mertes H. Let's not forget that many prepubertal girls do have other options besides ovarian tissue cryopreservation. *Human Reproduction* 2015;30(9):2011-2013. (editorial commentary)
- Mertes H. Does company-sponsored egg freezing promote or confine women's reproductive autonomy? *Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics* 2015;32(8):1205-1209.
- Mertes H and Hens K. The diversity of genetic perfection. *American Journal of Bioethics* 2015;15(6):34-6.
- Mertes H. Gamete derivation from stem cells: revisiting the concept of genetic parenthood. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 2014;40(11):744-747.
- Mertes H. A moratorium on breeding better babies. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 2014;40(11):734-735.
- Mertes H. The portrayal of healthy women requesting oocyte cryopreservation. *Facts, Views & Vision in ObGyn* 2013;5(2):141-146.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Testicular tissue cryopreservation: Combining access with safeguards. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 2013;13:46-48.
- Mertes H, Pennings G, Dondorp W, de Wert G. Implications of oocyte cryostorage for the practice of oocyte donation. *Human Reproduction* 2012;27:2886-2893
- Pennings G, Mertes H. Ethical issues in infertility treatment. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* 2012;26:853-863.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Elective oocyte cryopreservation: who should pay? *Human Reproduction* 2011;27:9-13.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Social egg freezing: for better, not for worse. *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* 2011;23:824-829. (Reprinted in *Fertility Magazine* 2013;15:40-45.)
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Ethical concerns eliminated: Safer stimulation protocols and egg banking. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 2011;11:33-35.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. The force of dissimilar analogies in bioethics. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 2011;32(2): 117-128.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Ethical aspects of the use of stem cell derived gametes for reproduction. *Health Care Analysis* 2010;18(3):267-278.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Preserving and restoring fertility: current techniques and prospects for the future. *Expert Review of Obstetrics & Gynecology* 2010;5(2):157-159. (meeting report)
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Stem cell research policies: Who's afraid of complicity? *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* 2009;19:38-42.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Cross-border research on human embryonic stem cells: legal and ethical considerations. *Stem Cell Reviews and Reports* 2009;5(1):10-17.
- Mertes H, Pennings G. Embryonic stem cell derived gametes and genetic parenthood: a problematic relationship. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 2008;17(1):7-14.

Mertes H, Pennings G. Oocyte donation for stem cell research. *Human Reproduction* 2007;22(3):629-634.

Mertes H, Pennings G, Van Steirteghem A. An ethical analysis of alternative methods to obtain pluripotent stem cells without destroying embryos. *Human Reproduction* 2006;21(11):2749-55.

#### Articles in national peer-reviewed journals

Mertes H. Understanding the ethical concerns that have shaped European regulation of human embryonic stem cell research. *Proceedings of the Belgian royal academies of medicine* 2012;1:127-139.

Mertes H, Pennings G. Eiceldonatie voor stamcelonderzoek: schuilt er kwaad in de vergoeding? *Ethiek en Maatschappij* 2008;11(4):3-14.

Mertes H, Pennings G, Van Steirteghem A. Op zoek naar 'ethische' embryonale stamcellen. *Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* 2007;63(12): 567-573.

#### Book chapters

Pennings G, Mertes H. Ethical aspects of genetic screening of gamete donors. *Medically assisted reproduction: towards a common European legislation?* M. Kaiafa-Gbandi, E. Kounougeri-Manoledaki, E. Symeonidou-Kastanidou (eds.). Athens, Thessaloniki: Sakkoulas Publications, 2015: 259-269.

Mertes H, Pennings G. Gamete generation from stem cells to avoid gamete donation and customized hESC from blastomeres as the cellular insurance for the newborn: will it ever be ethically acceptable? *Stem cells in reproductive medicine: basic science and therapeutic potential (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. C. Simon, A. Pellicer and R. Reijo Pera. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013: 93-101.

Pennings G, Mertes H. The state and the infertile patient looking for treatment abroad: a difficult relationship. *Consumer Medicine A*. Tupasela. Copenhagen, Nordic Council of Ministers, 2010: 93-110.

Mertes H, Pennings G. Gamete generation from stem cells: an ethicist's view. *Stem cells in human reproduction: basic science and therapeutic potential*. C. Simon and A. Pellicer. London, Informa Healthcare, 2009: 14-21.

#### Other

Mertes H. Koste wat het kost een kind? *De Standaard* 13/12/14 (opiniestuk)

Mertes H. Company-sponsored egg freezing: perk or coercion? *BioNews* 2014; 777.

Mertes H, Pennings G, Van Steirteghem A. Embryo's zijn geen miniatuurmensjes, maar balletjes cellen die niet kunnen denken of voelen. *De Morgen* 12/04/14 (opiniestuk)

Mertes H. Egg donation for stem cell research: reconciling scientific progress and women's welfare. *Bionews* 2006; 364.

Braeckman J, Mertes H, Demeyere F & De Meester R. Ethische matrix voor de evaluatie van dierproeven, uitgave van het Centrum voor Milieuwetenschap en Bio-ethiek aan de Universiteit Gent, 2003.

### Conference contributions / Lectures

Ethical aspects about collecting and the public exhibition of museum objects of human origin in academic collections. How do the U4 partners deal with that? 22-23 October 2015, Ghent (moderator of discussion session).

Is there a place for non-patient specific stem cell derived gametes in medically assisted reproduction? *2nd Meeting of the Belgian Society for Stem Cell Research (BeSSCR)*. 18 September 2015, Brussels (poster presentation).

Stem cell derived gametes and uterus transplants: Hurray for the end of third party reproduction! *Me Medicine vs. We Medicine: Personalised Medicine, Individual Choice and the Common Good* (invitational symposium). 9-10 September 2015, Amsterdam (invited speaker).

Should gamete donors be screened more thoroughly than aspiring parents? *Symposium Parenthood Research "Donor conception: An unfamiliar path to a normal family?"*. 27-28 August 2015, Ghent.

Uterus transplantation: the only option thus the good one? *29<sup>th</sup> European conference on Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care (ESPMH), "Medicalisation"*. 19-22 August 2015, Ghent.

Negligence and responsibility for genetic diseases in donor offspring. *19<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Prenatal Diagnosis and Therapy*. 13-15 July 2015, Washington.

The technological imperative in reproductive medicine. *31st Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 14-17 June 2015, Lissabon (poster presentation).

Pre-implantatie genetische diagnostiek en ethiek. *20<sup>e</sup> Nederlands-Vlaamse Doelencongres Infertilititeit, Gynaecologie en Obstetrie*. 22-24 April 2015, Rotterdam (invited speaker).

Who needs social egg freezing? *2<sup>nd</sup> International symposium on social egg freezing*. 6 March 2015, Barcelona (invited speaker).

Does company-sponsored egg freezing promote or confine personal autonomy? *Freezing of oocytes, embryos and ovarian tissue: focus on fertility management and fertility preservation*. 16-17 January 2015, Brussels.

Cryopreservation of oocytes for reproductive purposes – social and ethical aspects. *Postponed Motherhood and the Ethics of Family*. 14-15 October 2014, Göttingen (keynote lecture).

Are parthenotes embryos and does it really matter? *1st Meeting of the Belgian Society for Stem Cell Research (BeSSCR) Stem cells: ready for the transition from bench to bedside?* 12 September 2014, Ghent (poster presentation).

Maybe we shouldn't give infertile patients what they want, but what they need. *30th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 29 June – 2 July 2014, München.

Parenthood, happiness and IVF treatment: are patients helped, harmed or both? *Analytic Bioethics in Europe*. 28-29 May 2014, Ghent (invited speaker).

Ethische aspecten van vruchtbaarheidsbehoud bij kankerpatiënten. *Oncofertiliteit*. 22 May 2014, Ghent (invited speaker).

Stem cell derived gametes: Is there more to genetic parenthood than genes? *Stem cells: Origins, genetics, properties and significance for fertility preservation*. 27-28 April 2014, Brussels.

The donation of human embryos for stem cell research. *Third World Congress for Freedom of Scientific Research*. 4-6 April 2014, Rome (invited speaker).

The portrayal of healthy women requesting oocyte cryopreservation. *Third International Congress of the International Society for Fertility Preservation*. 7-9 november 2013, Valencia.

The irrationality of valuing genetic parenthood. *Artificial gametes: Science and ethics*. 12-13 September 2013, Maastricht (invited speaker).

Innovation in MAR: lessons from the past, challenges for the present, perspectives on the future. *29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 7-10 July 2013, London (invited speaker pre-congress course).

Fertility preservation for transgender people: should we go there? *The Third International Congress on Controversies in Cryopreservation of Stem Cells, Reproductive Cells, Tissue & Organs (CRYO)*. 21-23 March 2013, Berlin (poster presentation).

Financial compensations for oocyte donors: soon to be a debate of the past? *28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 1-4 July 2012, Istanbul.

Will oocyte cryopreservation quell ethical concerns over donor recruitment? *11<sup>th</sup> IAB World Congress Bioethics*. 26-29 June 2012, Rotterdam.

Ethical issues in fertility preservation. *Kanker en kinderswens, Fertilitieitspreservatie.nl*. 15 December 2011, Leiden.

Ethische voetnoten bij de derivatie en klinische toepassingen van humane embryonale stamcellen. *State of the art lecture Koninklijke Academie voor Geneeskunde*. 26 November 2011, Brussels.

Elective oocyte freezing: who should pay? *27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 3-6 July 2011, Stockholm.

Making the best of elective freezing, both clinically and ethically. *First Transatlantic Reproductive Technologies Network Conference*. 14-16 April 2011, Istanbul (poster presentation).

Gametes derived from embryonic stem cells: ethical aspects. *24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 6-9 July 2008, Barcelona (invited speaker pre-congress course).

Oocyte donation for stem cell research. *22<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology*. 18-21 June 2006, Prague.

### **Invited lectures at universities and scholarly institutions**

Embryonic stem cell research. Guest lecture Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 16 December 2015.

Dual use research. Guest lecture Universiteit Hasselt, 11 March 2015.

### **Teaching experience**

2011 - current                      Master course "Ethics, technology and society", Department of Engineering, Ghent University.

2013 - current	Master course "Bioethics", Department of Bio-engineering, Ghent University
2013 - current	Master course "Bioethics", Department of Biological Sciences, Ghent University
2014 - current	Master course "Bioethics", Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology, Ghent University
2014 - current	Master course "Issues in contemporary ethical theory", Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Ghent University

### **Jury memberships doctoral thesis**

2015: Inez Raes, "Building a family after donor conception – Ethical and empirical perspectives"

2014: Wannes Van Hoof, "Ethical problems related to cross-border reproductive care"

### **Jury memberships master thesis**

2015

Evelyn Van Caelenberghe, "Baarmoedertransplantatie: de ethische pro's en contra's" (promotor)

2014

Tim De Smet, "Menselijke voortplanting: recht of voorrecht?"

2013

Meynard Vasen, "Ontwaakte deugd. Een deugdethisch perspectief op boeddhistische ethiek"

Jennifer Dhossche, "Het meritocratisch discours en de legitimering van ongelijkheid"

Emilie Vanmeerhaeghe, "It's been a business doing pleasure with you. De invloed van de neo-liberale economie op prostitutie en trafficking van vrouwen voor de seksindustrie"

2012

Fleur Verschuere, "R2P-beleid van de VN. Een ethische analyse van het belang van de rechtvaardige oorlogstraditie voor R2P."

Jolien Braem, "De wenselijkheid van het hanteren van een dubbele standaard bij het beoordelen van de ethische aanvaardbaarheid van klinische experimenten"

2011

Romy Guilini, "In-vitrovlees. Algemene analyse van een niet-conventionele manier van vleesproductie"

Sanne De Wever, "Goed in het vlees? Een ethische analyse van de krachtigste argumenten om dierlijk voedsel te eten."

2010

Kelly Beck, "Gezondheidsbeleid vanuit de sekswerkersbeweging. Vertoog en praktijk"

### **Memberships**

2015 – current International Society for Prenatal Diagnosis

2014 – current	European Society for the Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare
2014 – current	Belgian Society for Stem Cell Research (BeSSCR, founding member)
2012 – current	Editorial Board Ethiek en Maatschappij
2012 – current	Editorial Board Human Reproduction (associate editor)
2012 – current	International Association of Bioethics
2010 – current	International Society for Fertility Preservation
2006 – current	Bioethics Institute Ghent (founding member)
2005 – current	European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology

**Reviewer/referee for following journals**

Human Reproduction

Cell Proliferation

Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics

Annals of Transplantation

BMC Medical Ethics

The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research

Health Care Analysis

Journal of Medical Ethics

Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal

Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics