

Record of topic suggestions

December 2016

The Council routinely invites people to [submit ideas](#) for topics that it might consider working on in future. For a topic to be selected for future work, it must come within the Council's [terms of reference](#), and should therefore meet the following criteria:

- Does it come within the broad sphere of research in the medical or biological sciences?
- Is the subject 'new', or are there new reasons for looking at it?
- Is the topic timely?
- Does it raise complex ethical questions?
- Does it have significant policy relevance and/or will it anticipate or respond to public concern?
- Can the Council make a distinctive contribution?

The following topics were suggested to the Council as possible project areas for further investigation, but were not taken forward to the [future work topics list](#) for consideration by the [Future Work Subgroup](#).

Topic suggestion	Response
What are the reasons for parents' preference for children that are genetically related to themselves?	Not within the Council's terms of reference as no clear link to a recent development in biological and medical research. It is not clear how the Council could make a distinctive contribution, as this seems primarily a psychological or anthropological question. Declined.
Conscientious objection within the health care profession	Not within the Council's terms of reference as no clear link to a recent development in biological and medical research. Declined.
Epigenetics	Not clear whether this raises complex ethical questions – those highlighted to date all seem to fall within the general remit of public health ethics. Declined.
Food as medicine	Not clear how this would raise complex ethical questions outside those already covered in the Council's report Public health: ethical issues . Declined.
What if stem cells turn into embryos in culture?	Not clear how the Council could make a distinctive contribution on this question alone, but could come under a broader topic. Covered in the topic summary 'In-vitro derived gametes and embryos'.
The following topics were suggested to the Council and will remain on the Council's 'watch list' to monitor with regard to new developments.	
Transgender issues	Of possible interest, although at present no clear link to a recent development in biological and medical research.
Drug development: are existing rules governing pharmaceutical industry fit for purpose?	Of possible interest, although at present no clear link to a recent development in biological and medical research.