

Emory University Center for Ethics, Rollins School of Public Health, and  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

present

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### ***Ethics, Infertility, and Public Health: Balancing Common Good and Private Choice***

Tuesday, August 30, 2011

Time: 5:00pm

Location: James B. Williams Medical Education Building, Room 110  
1648 Pierce Drive - Emory School of Medicine

Many causes have come together to put a spotlight on infertility in developing as well as developed countries; but media coverage probably accounts for a goodly portion of the public's interest in infertility in the United States. Who hasn't heard of Octomom, a cash-strapped, single mother of six children, who used fertility drugs to produce enough embryos for eight infants most of whom were born with one or more serious medical conditions; or the sixty-seven-year-old Italian woman who gave birth to a healthy baby, thanks to in-vitro fertilization (IVF). In this presentation, I argue that even if infertility is not, strictly speaking a disease, it is still a condition which contributes to being unhealthy and even unhappiness. I also argue that a public health focus on infertility prevention, detection, and management brings into focus many ethical issues that have been neglected or inadequately addressed at the clinical level. Although patient autonomy is very important, individual infertility patients should not always get their own way when, for example, they want to assume the risk of carrying multiple embryos/fetuses.

Internationally recognized for her contributions to feminist thought and bioethics, Dr. Tong is widely published and has served on numerous boards and committees, providing expert advice and oversight regarding issues such as health care reform, genetic and reproductive technology, biomedical research, and ethics and public policy. Previously Thatcher Professor in Medical Humanities at Davidson College, Dr. Tong came to UNC Charlotte in the fall of 1999.