Modern medicine is now in a position to make advanced prognoses that chart the entire course of illness and recovery. Paradoxically, this is coupled with a new dimension of uncertainty for the patient, i.e. coming to terms with discovering they have an increased risk of a particular disease and deciding what appropriate steps to take. In this publication, renowned experts in their fields discuss these issues.

The certainty and uncertainty of one’s fate are discussed from both methodological and epidemiological perspectives, using examples of diseases for which treatment and prognosis have dramatically changed. Despite profound insights into the human genome, personalized genetically tailored medicine still lies in the future. Religious, spiritual and philosophical dimensions are discussed, as are the ways in which they may help people cope with these new insights into their future, e.g. the promise of an afterlife.

This publication aims to bridge the different fields dealing with this area by addressing the challenges faced and encouraging dialogue. It will be of interest to all readers who deal with ethical problems of prognosis, particularly in medicine, as well as to theologians and sociologists.

Fields of Interest: General Medicine; Genetics; Philosophy/Ethics, Social Medicine, Sociology

Knowing One’s Medical Fate in Advance
Challenges for Diagnosis and Treatment, Philosophy, Ethics and Religion

Editors
G. Pfleiderer
M. Battegay
K. Lindpaintner

Modern medicine is now in a position to make advanced prognoses that chart the entire course of illness and recovery. Paradoxically, this is coupled with a new dimension of uncertainty for the patient, i.e. coming to terms with discovering they have an increased risk of a particular disease and deciding what appropriate steps to take. In this publication, renowned experts in their fields discuss these issues.

The certainty and uncertainty of one’s fate are discussed from both methodological and epidemiological perspectives, using examples of diseases for which treatment and prognosis have dramatically changed. Despite profound insights into the human genome, personalized genetically tailored medicine still lies in the future. Religious, spiritual and philosophical dimensions are discussed, as are the ways in which they may help people cope with these new insights into their future, e.g. the promise of an afterlife.

This publication aims to bridge the different fields dealing with this area by addressing the challenges faced and encouraging dialogue. It will be of interest to all readers who deal with ethical problems of prognosis, particularly in medicine, as well as to theologians and sociologists.

Fields of Interest: General Medicine; Genetics; Philosophy/Ethics, Social Medicine, Sociology

Knowing One’s Medical Fate in Advance
Challenges for Diagnosis and Treatment, Philosophy, Ethics and Religion
Editors: Pfleiderer, G.; Battegay, M.; Lindpaintner, K.

Contents

• Introduction: Pfleiderer, G.; Battegay, M.; Lindpaintner, K.

Medical Perspectives
• Evolving Therapy and Prognosis in HIV – How Knowing One’s Medical Fate in Advance Can Change Dramatically: Battegay, M.
• Related to Human Cognition: Is Personalization Feasible and Desirable?: Papassotiropoulos, A.

Ethical and Juridical Perspectives
• Ethical Decision-Making on Genetic Diagnosis Facing the Challenges of Knowing One’s Medical Fate in Advance: Brahier, G.
• Predictive Medicine – Changes in Our View of Ourselves and Others: Birnbacher, D.
• Current Challenges for the Law: Disclosure Dilemmas in Predictive Medicine: Dörr, B.S.

Religious Perspectives
• Fate and Judaism – Philosophical and Clinical Aspects: Gesundheit, B.
• Modern Medicine and My Future Life: A Christian-Theological Perspective: Pfleiderer, G.
• Karma, Contingency, and the ‘Point of No Return’: Predictive Medicine and Buddhist Perspectives: Schlieter, J.

Author Index / Subject Index

www.karger.com/medical-fate
Human gene and cell technology is a diverse and rapidly evolving field of research. As genes represent the ‘blueprint’ of an organism, their analysis and manipulation is a challenge to our understanding of human nature. Stem cell research, genetic testing, gene therapy, therapeutic and reproductive cloning—all these fields of application have been raising fundamental ethical and religious-theological questions: When does human life begin? Should human beings be allowed to interfere with natural procreation or to manipulate the genome of their own species? Is genetic engineering tantamount to ‘playing God’?

Based on the symposium ‘GenEthics and Religion’ held in Basel, Switzerland in May 2008, this volume examines the role religion can play in establishing ethical guidelines to protect human life in the face of rapid advances in biology and especially gene technology. It does so in a multidisciplinary way with contributions by philosophers, theologians, human geneticists, and several bioethicists representing the Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist perspectives. The essays illustrating a diversity of views and expressing the problems and self-critical reflectiveness of religious ethicists have been brought up to date and discuss the importance of religious ethics in society’s discourse on gene technology.