**Three-Parent Babies** By Nick Collins The Telegraph, September 17, 2012

Members of the public are being asked whether families with a genetic risk of incurable conditions like muscular dystrophy should be allowed to use the DNA of a third party to ‘create’ healthy children.

Although the resulting babies would inherit a small fraction of their DNA from the donor and not their mother or father, the procedure would spare all future generations from a host of rare and debilitating conditions.

The technique is currently forbidden as a treatment, but a public consultation launched today will help inform a decision by Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, on whether the clinical benefits outweigh any ethical concerns. Experts accept the technique, which involves genetically modifying a human egg or embryo, enters "unchartered territory" and raises serious ethical questions. As well as the moral implications of engineering embryos, there are questions over how the procedure would impact on a child's sense of identity and whether they should be allowed to contact the donor later in life. Should Mr Hunt decide to give the treatment the green light the technique could be written into law as early as next year, making Britain the first country in the world to allow human trials.

Lisa Jardine, chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), which is conducting the consultation, said the issue was of "enormous public interest", and not just to affected families. She said: "We find ourselves in unchartered territory, balancing the desire to help families have healthy children with the possible impact on the children themselves and wider society."

Comparing the ethical debate with the birth of Louise Brown, the first IVF baby, in 1978, she added that many people had expected the child to be a "monster" and seen conception outside the womb as "absolutely appalling", but that IVF has since become commonplace. She said: "Here, we are going that mile further which is a genetic modification of the egg. That is uncharted territory. I feel very strongly that once we have genetic modification we have to be damn sure that we are happy, because this is not about us. "This is not about our children. It's not even about our grandchildren. It's about many generations down the line what the consequences might be."

The new technique, being developed by researchers at Newcastle University, is designed to tackle a range of genetic conditions passed to children by their mothers through mutations in these genes. A survey of 800 people by the Progress Educational Trust found that two thirds supported the use of the technique while a third opposed it, while a report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics last year claimed the approach would be ethical.

The public consultation, being overseen by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, will run until December 7 with members of the public encouraged to register their views via a dedicated website. There will also be two public events held in London and Manchester where people can learn about the technique and register their views. A report compiling the feedback will be published in March. The panel appointed to oversee the consultation includes scientists as well as leading voices opposed to the treatment including Josephine Quintavalle, of the Comment on Reproductive Ethics campaign group. She said: "This is not about curing disease in an existing human being, it is creating a new kind of embryo and the alterations you have made will pass on to future generations. You are playing around with the building blocks and restructuring how human life is created. "

**Question 1 According to the journalist, why is this new medical technique controversial ?**

(80 words, ± 10%) Answer the question in your own words.

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This new medical technique raises controversy since it affects genom(e)s while harbouring the hope of better and healthier lives . The journalist therefore warns that modifying genom(e)s by adding another DNA that is another donour necessarily entails ethical issues even though it could enable to eradicate some genetic diseases. Firstly,these new embryos and then people might later cope with identity issues as to know who their parents truly are. Besides , there could also be long-term consequences since these genetic modifications may impact future generations genetical and psychosocial-wise.

**88 words**