The growing knowledge about the human genome provides the basis for the rapidly increasing number of available genetic tests. Amongst other areas of medical and non-medical applications, such tests are more and more used in the field of predictive (or pre-symptomatic) genetic diagnosis, i.e. to use genetic tests

- to diagnose an inheritable disease which is not yet clinically manifest, and/or
- to diagnose an individual’s genetic status as potential carrier of such a disease.

Genetic counselling is to help patients and their relatives to plan their lives adequately on the basis of genetic test results. Predictive genetic testing is connected to a number of ethical, legal and social issues, which are also addressed in genetic counselling.

Against this background the project that compares Austria, Germany and Japan has the following goals:

- to examine the political framework for genetic counselling.
- to analyse genetic counselling in clinical practice.
- to formulate suggestions to develop genetic counselling.
- to use the Neo-Socratic Dialogue as a trans-disciplinary tool for dialogue and problem solving.

Final project conference in Vienna on 8 July 2008

Project
With a cross-cultural perspective the project draws on social constructivist accounts of the technology-society relationship.

It adopts a multi-method approach and uses an inter- and transdisciplinary project design, which includes researchers and practitioners from various disciplines in the social and life-sciences as well as relevant stakeholders and people affected by predictive genetic tests.

The methodological approaches to achieve the project goals include:

- An ethnographic study of clinical practice of genetic counselling in predictive genetic diagnosis in Austria.
- A policy analysis to investigate the legal and institutional framework of genetic counselling; and to explore the possibilities for more responsive and participatory policy making processes in order to avoid implementation problems.
- The use of the NSD, a consensus-oriented conversation method in which a small group of participants guided by facilitators systematically reflects on their personal experiences in order to address normative questions.
- Accompanying research, which will analyse whether the NSD is an appropriate tool to address ethical problems of modern biotechnology.
- A comparison of relevant practices of counselling in predictive genetic testing and its political framework between Austria, Germany and Japan shall reveal the cultural embeddedness of genetic counselling and show the usefulness of NSD for transdisciplinary problems solving in various socio-cultural settings.
Benefits of the project

- A better understanding of the actual practices and potential problems of genetic counselling for genetic testing in Austria.
- Recommendations to improve counselling practices in genetic testing and relevant policy-making processes, which provide the legal framework for clinical practice.
- Accompanying research on the NSD as transdisciplinary method for participatory problem solving in various socio-cultural settings.

The project started in March 2006 and is scheduled to end in November 2008.

Events

Beate Littig:
"New Biotechnologies, Ethics and Socratic Dialogues: The cases of Xenotransplantation and Genetic Counselling". Key-note lecture, at: "Living Together In Our Modern World: Reason and the Role of Dialogue",

Grießler, Erich; Littig, Beate; Pichelstorfer, Anna:
"Autonomy, Self-Determination and Nondirectiveness in Clinical Practice of Genetic Counseling. Results from 4 Neo-Socratic Dialogues"

Littig, Beate; Grießler, Erich; Pichelstorfer, Anna:
"Neo-Socratic Dialogues for Improved Genetic Counselling"

Hadolt, Bernhard:
"The implementation of pre-symptomatic genetic testing in Austrian genetic counselling services"

Grießler, Erich; Littig, Beate; Pichelstorfer, Anna:
"Neo-Socratic Dialogues for Improved Genetic Counselling"
20. - 23.8.2008 Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S) and European Association for the Study of Science and Technoly (EASST) Conference, Rotterdam, Netherlands

8. Juli 2008 Final Conference, (1.9 MB)
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

7. Juli 2008
2. Project Workshop,
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

23.-
Neo-Socratic Dialogue in the University Hospital Matsumoto,
24.2.2008
Nagano, Japan

18. -
Neo-Socratic Dialogue III and IV, "Ethical questions of genetic consultations"
20.1.2008
Tulbinger Kogel, Vienna

22.-
Neo-Socratic Dialogue at the University of Hiroshima,
23.12.2007
Hiroshima

12. -
Neo-Socratic Dialogue II, "Ethical questions of genetic consultations"
14.10.2007
Tulbinger Kogel, Vienna

14. -
Neo-Socratic Dialogue I, "Ethical questions of genetic consultations"
16.9.2007
Bildungs- und Begegnungszentrum Clara Sahlberg, Berlin-Wannsee

Comparative qualitative research: Annual Conference of the German Society of
Sociology, Section Methods of Qualitative Social Research 2007,
1. Project Workshop,
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

19. -
21.3.2007
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Project-Workshop on Theory and Empirical Application of the Concept "Social
Practices" with Prof. Stefan Hirschauer,
23. -
24.2.2007
University of Mainz
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Project-Workshop on "Qualitative Comparative Analysis" with Prof. Benoît Rihoux,
18. -
19.12.2006
Université Catholique de Louvain
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Grießler, Erich; Littig, Beate: "Neo-Socratic Dialogue as a Participative Method in
Biomedicine",
14.11.2006
Institute for Technology Assessment,
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Grießler, Erich; Littig, Beate:
"Neo-Socratic Dialogue on Genetic Counselling",
21. -
23.9.2006
Final Workshop of the ELSA Project "Reden wir über GOLD!"
Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Hadolt, Bernhard; Littig, Beate: "Qualitative Comparison of Social Practices: Genetic
Counselling in Austria and Japan",
15. -
16.7.2006  International Conference on Comparative Social Sciences
Sophia University, Tokyo

10. - 11.7.2006  Kick-Off-Workshop with Japanese project partners,
University Osaka, Osaka

7.7.2006  Grießler, Erich; Littig, Beate: "Neo-Socratic Dialogue. A stakeholder approach to
science communication. Experiences from Austria".
Osaka University, Osaka

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Results

Erich Grießler, Anna Pichelstorfer, Tsuyoishi Horie
Unter Mitarbeit von: Horst Gronke, Beate Littig und Anna D. Szyma
Neosokratische Dialoge zu ethischen Fragen genetischer Beratung in Österreich, Deutschland und Japan
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Stefanie Mayer The Regulation of Predictive Genetic Testing and Genetic Counselling in Germany Pr Details dazu... Regulation Deutschland PDF (292 KB)

Yumi Nishimrua The Practice of Genetic Counseling for Predictive Genetic Testing in Japan Details dazu... The Practice of Genetic Counseling for Predictive Genetic Testing in Japan PDF (180 KB)

Steve Schwarzer Beratung in unterschiedlichen Kontexten: Sozialarbeit, Psychologische Beratung, Lebensberatung, Seelsorge Details dazu... Literaturstudie PDF (176 KB)
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