

Note that the opinions expressed within the abstracts and presentations are those of the authors/presenters alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of WADA.

Abstract

By Thomas H. Murray, Ph.D.
The Hastings Center

“Ethics and Genetic Enhancement in Sport”

The prospect that genetic manipulation could create super-athletes has prompted broad public attention despite doubts about its scientific credibility in the near term. Consideration of the ethics of genetic enhancement in sport, however, must begin immediately. Genetic manipulation shares many ethically relevant features with other biomedical technologies used to improve the performance of athletes. This presentation will analyze critically the main arguments used on behalf of such interventions, all of which have fatal conceptual, ethical, or practical flaws. It will also present the most robust reasons for limiting the use of such performance enhancing technologies. Finally, it will explore the ways in which genetic enhancement might pose a challenge to the usual ethical understanding of sport, which is grounded in the concepts of natural talents and the virtuous perfection of those talents.