

Professor Heather Draper PhD, MA(thesis), BA(Hons)

Professor of Biomedical Ethics

Primary Care Clinical Sciences

Contact details

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About

Heather Draper is Professor of Biomedical Ethics.

Heather has published over 70 research papers on a wide range of issues in bioethics in peer reviewed journals and edited collections.

Heather strives to bridge the gap between the distinctive research cultures of medicine and applied philosophy. She is an enthusiastic supporter of inter- and multi-disciplinary research. She has introduced empirical methods into her research, blending the results of data collection with ethical analysis in a methodology increasingly referred to as empirical bioethics. She has received research funding from National Institute for Health Research (Research for Patient Benefit), European Union (FP7), EPSRC and the Arts and Humanities Research Council

Heather is also active in supporting clinical ethics serving on national and local bodies advising on ethical issues in clinical practice and policy.

Qualifications

- PhD Philosophy 1986
- MA(thesis) Philosophy 1983
- BA(Hons) Theology 1982

Biography

Heather Draper studied Theology at the University of Manchester. Although she greatly enjoyed the mysteries of ancient Egyptian religious practices and beliefs, she decided that her future lay in applied ethics and moved over to the Philosophy Department at Manchester for her postgraduate work. She wrote a PhD on control over human reproduction, which was completed in 1986. At this time new reproductive technologies really were new – the Warnock Report, which ultimately led to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act and the establishment of the HFEA, was published in 1984. She has continued to publish on issues arising from these technologies, in particular to the concept of ‘parent’ and notions of parental responsibility, which she regards as central to this definition. This has also resulted in work on paternity testing and broader, on-going issues in parental responsibility, particularly when parents separate.

Heather came to the University of Birmingham in 1994. She had previously worked at the medical school of University of Liverpool and in social ethics at St Martin's College in Lancaster. She was appointed for formalised teaching in medical ethics and law for the MBChB and to establish a postgraduate programme, which later metamorphosed into an intercalated degree in Healthcare Ethics and Law. She continues to teach medical students and postgraduate practitioners.

Being for many years the only philosopher working in the medical school, Heather was engaged by her colleagues in a variety of issues in bioethics. This resulted in her broad range of research interests from transplantation ethics, through public health to research ethics. She has served on several national bodies (UK Donation Committee, Human Genetics Commission (co opted), Unrelated Live Transplantation Regulatory Authority) as well as being active in clinical and research ethics locally. She was active in the pandemic influenza planning of two local hospitals and appointed as a consultant on ethics to the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority during the 2009 swine ‘flu pandemic.

Heather was seconded to the Philosophy Department for 3 years in 2006 and during this time worked in the Centre for the Study of Global Ethics. This resulted in funded work on counter-terrorism and surveillance, which is still on-going, and which Heather is using to good effect in a new stream of work on telecare, assistive technology and public health surveillance.

Teaching

Teaching Programmes

[BMedSci \(/undergraduate/courses/med/biomedical-science.aspx\)](#) (PoSH)

- Research Ethics
- Empirical Bioethics
- Research Methods for Bioethics
- Biomedical Ethics and Law
- Internal Ethics Review Committee (Chair)

GEC – ethics and law expert

[MBChB \(/undergraduate/courses/med/medicine.aspx\)](#) – ethics and law in years 1,2,3,5

[Clinical Primary and Community Care MSc \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/med/clinical-primary-comm-care.aspx\)](#) - Introduction to Biomedical Ethics

Postgraduate supervision

Heather is currently lead supervisor for two AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award funded students:

[Greg Moorlock \(/staff/profiles/haps/students/moorlock-greg.aspx\)](#) – Directed and conditional organ donation

[Simon Jenkins \(/staff/profiles/haps/PublicHealthEpidemiologyBiostatistics/jenkins-simon.aspx\)](#) – Allocation of gametes donated for fertility treatment.

She also co-supervises two students looking at different areas of research ethics: Helen Kirkby who is funded by the MRC Trials Methodology Hub to look at the use of electronic participant information sheets as a means of tailoring information to the needs of potential research participants; and, Derek Kyte who is funded by the National School Primary Care Research to look at the methodological and ethical issues in health-related quality of life research

Heather is interested in supervising doctoral research students in any area of bioethics (employing conventional philosophical research methods or qualitative methods, or a combination of both), and in particular in the following areas:

- Ethics of parenting, reproductive ethics
- Ethics of tissue and organ transplantation
- Research ethics
- Ethics of assistive technologies
- Ethics of telecare
- Ethics of infectious disease control

If you are interesting in studying any of these subject areas please contact Heather using the contact details above, or for any general doctoral research enquiries, please email: dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk (<mailto:dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk>) or call +44 (0)121 414 5005.

For a full list of available Doctoral Research opportunities, please visit our [Doctoral Research programme listings \(http://www.bham.findaphd.com/?es=y&apl=y&aplt=&show\)](http://www.bham.findaphd.com/?es=y&apl=y&aplt=&show).

Research

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Ethics of parenting and reproduction

Heather has long argued that parenting should not be defined in terms of genetic relatedness but in terms of the fulfilment of parental responsibilities. This leads to questions about how parenting responsibilities are acquired and lost, what makes one a 'good' parent, the scope for good parents to sever their parental responsibilities, and what parental obligations are for adult children, and even grandchildren.

Funded projects:

- 2010 – 2012 [AHRC Research network \(/research/activity/mds/projects/HaPS/PCCS/MESH/AHRC/index.aspx\)](#) Post-separation families and shared residence: setting the interdisciplinary research agenda for the future
- 2010 – 2013 AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship The ethical allocation of eggs donated for the purpose of fertility treatment
- 2004 – 2007 Wellcome Biomedical Ethics Studentship Becoming and father/refusing fatherhood: how paternal responsibilities and rights are generated.

Transplantation and Public Health Ethics

Rising levels of obesity have contributed significantly to an increasing need for organs for donation, including the need for live donors. Some of these live donors are parents of children in need, others are altruistic donors giving to strangers. The majority of live donors are permitted to direct their donations – indeed the desire to help a particular recipient is a primary motivator to donation. Directed and conditional donation is not permitted in the case of deceased donation. Recipients have an interest in receiving the best quality organs available to them, but demand consistently outstrips supply. Clinicians are seeking to increase the supply of organs being using, sometimes modifying, organs that would not previously have been used. The extent to which recipients understand the relative risks accepting or refusing organs under these circumstances is unclear, nor is it clear whether recipients should be obliged to consider others on the waiting list when making such decisions. Heather is working on projects that address these issues, in some cases with BMedSc students using empirical bioethics to enhance their intercalated learning experience.

Heather is also interested in emergency measures and contingency planning in public health. With Tom Sorell, she published a widely cited paper arguing that patients do have responsibilities. It is not clear, however, how these responsibilities can be enforced. In an emergency coercive measures may be justified; but how are such emergencies to be determined? Why are epidemics of infectious diseases treated differently to epidemics of e.g. obesity? To what extent are coercive measures justified in public health that might not be justified in other health spheres? Equally, how do we respond to changing demographics that increase demands on public resources; should we be thinking in terms of an epidemic of ageing, for instance? Are telecare and assistive technologies a form of care, and what is the balance between effective use of this technology and intrusive surveillance of the elderly in their own homes?

Funded projects:

- 2011 – 2014 FP7 ICT [ACCOMPANY \(/research/activity/mds/projects/HaPS/PCCS/MESH/research/accompany.aspx\)](#) - Acceptable robotic companions for ageing years see
- 2009 – 2012 AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship. An empirically informed ethical analysis of directed and conditional organ donation
- 2008 – 2009 Community health and social care workers' attitudes to working during pandemic influenza. West Midlands NHS
- 2007-09 NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme Healthcare workers' attitudes to working during pandemic influenza

Research Ethics

It is virtually impossible to work in bioethics and undertake empirical research without developing an interest in research ethics. Researchers are constantly balancing what is required to produce valid results with respect for the rights and interests of research participants. Heather is interested in this balance, and in the pursuit of empirical data to support expert opinion in issues arising from the competing interests of all concerned.

Funded projects:

- 2011-2013 National School Primary Care Research. Methodological and ethical issues in health-related quality of life research
- 2009 – 2013 MRC Trials Methodology Hub The use of electronic participant information sheets as a means of tailoring information to the needs of potential research participants
- 2008 – 2011 THINKWELL initiative TAMBA Heritability Study – embedded study on unfolding electronic participant information sheets

Other

Heather is involved with a variety of other projects across the College and University.

Funded projects:

- 2012-2015 EU FP7 (securities) SURVEILLE – Surveillance: Ethical issues, legal limitations and efficiency (website under construction)

Other activities

Current professional service:

- UK Donation Ethics Committee 2010 –
- Co-convenor Feminist Approaches to Bioethics 9th International Congress 2010-2012
- Donation Committee, University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust 2008 –
- Organ Donation Taskforce Education Group, University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust 2008 –
- Advisory Committee on Ethics to the Fertility Clinic, Women's Hospital Trust, Birmingham 1997 -
- Clinical Ethics Committee, Birmingham Children's Hospital 2003 -
- Clinical Ethics Committee, Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust 2003 -

Previous national professional service

- NHS Blood and Transplant / British Transplant Society working party on consent 2010
- Human Genetics Commission co-opted 2000-2003 & 2003 – 2005
- Society of Applied Philosophy, Executive 2000-2005
- Unrelated Live Transplantation Regulatory Authority (ULTRA) 1998 - 2003

Publications

Draper, H., Sorell, T. Telecare, remote monitoring and care. *Bioethics* (forthcoming)

Sorell, T Draper, H Telecare, surveillance and the welfare state. *American Journal of Bioethics*(forthcoming)

Antoniou, E., Draper, H., Reed, K., Burls, A., Southwood, T. R., Zeegers, M. (2011) An empirical study on the preferred size of the participant information sheet in research. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 37(9):557-562

Draper, H., Sorell, T., Ives, J., Damery, S., Greenfield, S., Parry, J., Petts J Wilson, S. (2010) Non-professional healthcare workers and ethical obligations to work during pandemic influenza. *Public Health Ethics* 3: 23-34

Sarah Damery, Heather Draper, Sheila Greenfield, Jon Ives, Jayne Parry, Judith Petts, Tom Sorell, Sue Wilson (2010) Healthcare workers' perceptions of the duty to work during an influenza pandemic, *Journal of Medical Ethics* 36: 12-18

Draper, H., Ives, J. (2009) Testing for Fatherhood: Two paradoxes of paternity testing? *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 31: 407-41

Ives, J, Draper, H (2009) Appropriate methodologies for empirical bioethics: It's all relative. *Bioethics* 23(40): 249-258

Draper, H, Wilson, S, Flanagan, S Ives, J (2009) Offering payments, reimbursement and incentives to patients and family doctors to encourage participation in research. *Family Pract*

Expertise

Medical ethics, especially reproductive technologies (assisted conception, gamete donation, IVF surrogacy, designer babies); paternity issues (e.g. misattributed paternity, CSA decisions, father's rights, absent parents); organ and tissue donation

