

Cambridge University Press

0521832012 - Quality of Life and Human Difference: Genetic Testing, Health Care, and Disability

Edited by David Wasserman, Jerome Bickenbach and Robert Wachbroit

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Quality of Life and Human Difference

This innovative volume brings together two important literatures for the first time. One concerns the role of quality-of-life assessments in social policy, and especially in health policy. The second concerns ethical and social issues raised by prenatal testing for disability; a theme of this literature has been the role played by controversial assumptions about the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Hitherto, these two literatures have had little contact with each other. Few scholars have written about both or have compared the two domains in a systematic way, and people with disabilities and disability scholars are underrepresented in recent discussions about health policy and quality-of-life assessment. This book brings to bear the perspectives of disability scholars on issues that have largely been the province of health methodology, policy, and philosophy, while focusing philosophical policy analysis on problems that have largely been the province of disability scholarship.

This volume will be sought after by bioethicists, philosophers, and specialists in disability studies and health care economics.

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Acknowledgments

The present volume explores the relationship of variations in physical and mental functioning to the quality of human lives, and the relevance of the expected or assessed quality of a human life to decisions about whether to create or extend it. It arises from a working group the editors convened in January 2001 (with support from NIH Grant HG011979-02) to address issues about disability, well-being, and the valuation of lives raised by recent developments in health technology and methodology. Most of the chapters in this volume were initially prepared for the working group and were revised in light of its deliberations.