

Medical ethicist Brian Earp to speak at Secularism 2019

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The National Secular Society is pleased to announce that cross-disciplinary medical ethicist Dr Brian D. Earp will address its [Secularism 2019](#) conference on 'reclaiming religious freedom'.

Dr Earp, a research fellow at the University of Oxford and Yale University, will address children's right to bodily autonomy.

He [spoke](#) about infant genital cutting at the NSS's Healthcare and Secularism conference in October, when he [argued](#) that all children should be entitled to autonomy over their genitals regardless of their sex.

He also warned of an "imminent collision course" in law and policy regarding different ethical standards for female, male and intersex forms of genital cutting.

Dr Earp's interests include psychology, the philosophy of science and bioethics.

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans said Dr Earp would make an "excellent" addition to the line-up of speakers.

"Brian Earp's superb talk at our Healthcare and Secularism conference last year made a compelling case that all children should be given the chance to control their own bodies.

"Children's freedom to accept or reject religion when they are ready to do so is too often overlooked in debates over genital cutting. We're looking forward to hearing Brian develop his thoughts on this subject as an issue of both medical ethics and religious freedom."

Secularism 2019 will explore religious freedom as a right that belongs to everyone and which has limits when it impinges on human rights such as bodily autonomy and freedom of expression.

The other confirmed speakers include Sara Khan, the government's lead commissioner for countering extremism, and Dr Ahmed Shaheed, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

The keynote address at the conference will be delivered by Rachel Laser, the CEO of the US-based campaign group Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

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Secularism 2019: Reclaiming Religious Freedom

This conference will serve to highlight that true "religious freedom" means freedom of belief for people of all religions and none, and will also explore the limits of religious freedom when it impedes on other human rights, including bodily autonomy, equality and freedom of expression.

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