

Heinrichs | Rüter | Stake | Ihde

Neuroenhancement



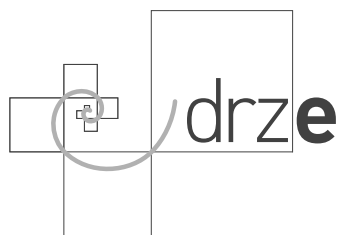
VERLAG KARL ALBER



Ethik in den Biowissenschaften –
Sachstandsberichte des DRZE

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Band 21: Neuroenhancement



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Neuroenhancement concerns the improvement of a person's mental properties, abilities, and performance. These improvements can be achieved by diverse techniques and with different targets. Biochemical substances, medical devices, and behavioural strategies are employed in order to enhance, for example, cognition and mood.

The improvement of mental and physical properties, abilities, and performance has always been part of cultural history. The various techniques of neuroenhancement offer new opportunities of such improvement, but also come with substantive perils. Their employment may promote people's autonomy by facilitating self-expression. At the same time, however, these techniques may also undermine people's autonomy by making them the object of instrumentalization. Neuroenhancement thus involves significant normative challenges for individual persons as well as for society as a whole. In considering how neuroenhancement can be employed ethically, the benefits and risks must be carefully analysed.

This expert report provides a concise overview of the contemporary debate on neuroenhancement. It discusses the definition, techniques and targets of neuroenhancement and examines arguments for and against it at the level of individual persons, social interaction, and social policy.

Neuroenhancement hat die Verbesserung der mentalen Eigenschaften, Fähigkeiten und Leistung einer Person zum Gegenstand. Diese Verbesserungen können durch verschiedene Techniken und zu unterschiedlichen Zwecken erzielt werden. Biochemische Substanzen, medizinische Apparate und Verhaltensstrategien werden eingesetzt, um beispielsweise kognitive Prozesse zu optimieren und Stimmungen zu beeinflussen.

Die Verbesserung mentaler und physischer Eigenschaften, Fähigkeiten und Leistung war immer schon Teil der menschlichen Kulturgeschichte. Die verschiedenen Techniken des Neuroenhancement bieten neuartige Möglichkeiten der Verbesserung, bergen jedoch auch signifikante Gefahren. Sie können einerseits die Autonomie von Personen stärken, indem sie die Selbstentfaltung fördern. Andererseits kann die Autonomie von Personen durch den Einsatz dieser Techniken auch erheblich beeinträchtigt werden, wenn Personen zum Gegenstand von Instrumentalisierungen gemacht werden. Neuroenhancement stellt folglich sowohl Personen als auch die Gesellschaft im Ganzen vor umfassende normative Herausforderungen. Bei der Betrachtung, wie Neuroenhancement ethisch rechtfertigbar eingesetzt werden kann, müssen daher Nutzen und Risiken sorgfältig erwogen werden.

Der vorliegende Sachstandsbericht bietet einen konzisen Überblick über die gegenwärtige Neuroenhancement-Debatte. Definition, Techniken und Zwecke des Neuroenhancement werden erörtert und Argumente für und wider seine Anwendung auf personaler, interpersonaler sowie sozialpolitischer Ebene untersucht.

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Mandy Stake / Julia Ihde*

Neuroenhancement

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