

## Designer Babies – Broken Promises and Untold Consequences

Posted By [Ilene Little](#) On August 31, 2011 @ 11:48 pm In [Medical Resources Overseas](#) | [No Comments](#)

### Sperm Donors – Sperm Banks – Surrogacy – Donor-Conceived Children

#### Sperm Donors and Surrogacy are Big Business for Medical Tourism

Follow the money. Sperm and egg donors and surrogacy are big business for medical tourism.

Perhaps it's time for ethical companies to freshen up the privacy disclaimers on the contracts donors and surrogates sign.

Men and women both need to realize that there are businesses promising donors and surrogates privacy; privacy that they cannot realistically deliver in this world of technology.



[1]

### Sperm Donors Beware

#### No Such Thing as Anonymity

According to Wendy Kramer, Co-founder and Director of the [Donor sibling Registry](#) <sup>[2]</sup> (DSR), no one should be promising any donor anonymity; not with DNA testing and Google searches.

### Designer Babies are Big Business in Medical Tourism

"It is astounding that sperm banks still make this promise to donors," said Kramer, "The Donor Sibling Registry, alone, has united more than 8,500 donor-conceived siblings and many with their biological parents." [Read about how people can find their donors through DNA testing without their donors being aware](#) <sup>[3]</sup>.

### The history of Donor-Conceived Children

When you think of the creation of life, what comes to mind? Do you have several ideas and thoughts on technology and the new ways of conception that are now available? Sperm donation dates back to the late 1700's when a scientist began experimenting with the theory of artificial insemination. Egg and sperm donation has become a very influential way to assist people in creating their families, further adjoining their dreams with reality.

I have found references stating that sperm donation was introduced to society in 1977. However, many people born in the 40's, 50's and 60's have reported being donor-conceived on the Donor Sibling Registry (DSR) website.

This fertility industry has since evolved, and has also gained attention from people all over the world. Doctors from all different countries have been practicing these methods and assisting people with their desire of creating a family, but the industry has not been benefiting from proper regulation during this process.

### Sperm Banks – A Few Bad Apples

The donor-conceived baby industry has hit a few ethical bumps in the road. Too many donor banks and fertility clinics are promising what they deliver only a superficial basis; empty assurances of anonymity and poor quality of donor profiling.

Guess who blew the whistle on the shallow ethics of many clinics and donor banks? It was the curious donor-siblings, those hundreds of siblings related genetically via a test tube who relentlessly found ways to track each other down.

According to Kramer, remarkably few sperm banks will check information provided by the donor, and there are only some banks that will screen for some diseases or conditions.

Currently, the only federally mandated law regulating the sperm donation process is that each facility must screen for sexually transmitted diseases. This can create unhealthy circumstances further down the line. Thorough and correct background screening will benefit all parties involved.

Many donors report on the DSR that if genetic testing would have been offered by their clinic, they would have opted to share this information.

This shows that people are not afraid to disclose their identity and are open minded to sharing personal information to benefit future offspring.

Standardization and regulation of all aspects of donating life should be instituted to prevent these circumstances from occurring.

### **What they don't tell you about sperm-donor profiling**

Says Wendy Kramer, "We have found that many donor profiles are just not accurate, so what you are choosing, isn't always what you get.

Individuals from different countries are able to donate their sperm and eggs, but the agencies responsible for its governance may not be stressing the importance of accurate and thorough medical, social, and familial background screenings. These are important contributing factors of the donation process that are beneficial to everyone involved.

## **Hundreds if not thousands of siblings – The untold consequences**

The largest group of siblings recorded on the DSR has now reached 130 children from one sperm donor which can be quite a concept for some to believe. However, according to Kramer, this is not an estimate, but a fact.

Multiple siblings impact the donor-conceived family greatly because of the inclusion of other brothers and sisters and the possibility of an extended family of sorts. Many donor-conceived children state they are curious about other family members and think of their donor and siblings as you would a close relative.

Which begs the question, "How will you explain to your teenage son or daughter that they may have hundreds and potentially even thousands of brothers and sisters, many in the same age bracket? "

What happens say in a relatively lower populated area where one guy fathers numerous children who are all within a few years of each other, possibly attending the same schools, growing up together, dating, getting married, having children of their own then finding out they are brother and sister?

"The donor industry might say that statistically random meetings are impossible; that no donor kids will ever meet their half-siblings. However, I see proof of random meetings all the time on the DSR website," says Kramer.

"I'm telling you, I hear about random meetings maybe once a month of people meeting at a school function, at a playground, on a cruise, at a party, just for example," she said.

"It happens because people start talking about their kids being donor-conceived, and they say, "oh, what's your donor number?" In some cases they notice the kids look alike, and

they ask, "Is your child donor-conceived by any chance?" Kramer said.

Imagine the scenario where these kids will be college freshmen together? "I don't have any records of donor siblings dating and marrying one another," said Kramer, "but I can imagine it probably has happened."

"Like my son said, if you're interested in a girl and you even in the slightest way resemble them, you need to ask her if she was donor-conceived and trade donor numbers. But if she doesn't know she's donor-conceived, then how would we avoid dating a half-sibling?"

Kramer's son, Ryan, is donor-conceived and the co-founder of the DSR website. Read about Ryan's experience: "[Anonymous Sperm Donor Traced on Internet](#)"<sup>[3]</sup>. "That story is Ryan's story," said Kramer.

"I think the way of the future is that the marriage license procedure is going to insist on DNA testing as well as testing for infectious diseases," said Kramer, "Honestly, I think that within 20 years all of our DNA is going to be in a big database. So at some point it will be impossible for parents to continue lying to their children."

"The unavoidable consequence is that curious siblings will find each other. Did we really think that donors could remain anonymous and related siblings would fail to find each other when faced with hundreds of thousands of inquisitive, intelligent, and motivated donor-conceived teenagers?

Guess again. What the kids found out not only disclosed their own genetic roots, but also the cracks in the system of donor data-collection.

Related articles:

- 1) A Father's Day plea — let's stop anonymous sperm donations Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/06/14/father-day-plea-let-stop-anonymous-sperm-donations/#ixzz1y44yBCIT><sup>[4]</sup>
- 2) "[Designer Babies A New Trend in Medical Tourism](#)"<sup>[5]</sup>

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[1] Image: **<http://internationalhealthblog.traveling4health.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/donor-conceived-baby-Traveling4Health1.jpg>**

[2] Donor sibling Registry: **<http://www.donorsiblingregistry.com/>**

[3] how people can find their donors through DNA testing without their donors being aware: **<https://www.donorsiblingregistry.com/dsr-support-and-info/dna-testing/>**

[4] <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/06/14/father-day-plea-let-stop-anonymous-sperm-donations/#ixzz1y44yBCIT>: **<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/06/14/father-day-plea-let-stop-anonymous-sperm-donations/#ixzz1y44yBCIT>**

[5] Designer Babies A New Trend in Medical Tourism: **<http://community.traveling4health.com/story/ivf-and-designer-babies>**

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