

Father of 26 Living Children

By Silvia Galipeau, La Presse, Quebec, Sunday, June 17, 2007

Call him "test tube father." The man has donated his sperm now for two and a half years. He has thus participated in the conception of at least 26 babies.

We found him through one of the main sites for babies conceived through artificial insemination with the sperm of an anonymous donor: donorsiblingregistry.com, which is comprised of 7933 members in the world (where 450 donors, a rare species who have not chosen anonymity).

No. Never did he imagine, in giving his sperm, that he would have such descendance. "It's a little crazy, when you think about it." As to knowing whether he will meet his kids one day, yes, he hopes. "Especially since I myself have no kids. But it concerns a totally new issue for me, and I really do not know what such an encounter would offer. Will there be a relationship, and if yes, what kind?"

No one knew, now after 20 years, what would happen to all these infants, conceived through a sperm donor. Today, however, there exists a large number in search of their father, similar to those adopted children in Quebec, in the 50s.

"The sperm banks are a business. When they have sold the sperm, they are finished. They do not think of the little being who will one day question his origins", says Wendy Kramer, of Colorado, site coordinator, herself the mother of a baby conceived with the sperm of an unknown.

"Access to origins is not considered a right", explains Alain Roy, professor of children's rights at the University of Montreal. The gift of sperm, anonymous in the state, illustrates an "unconscious fundamental desire of every child to know one day his origins. It is a serious matter", he says.

According to them, sperm banks respond that, if they had to lift the guaranty of anonymity, their donor base, already restricted, would disappear and dry out. "To lift anonymity, is to suggest a certain relationship, it would be showing reality as it is, analyzes Josephine Johnston, director of research in rights and ethics at the Hastings Center, in the state of New York. If our only means of recruiting sperm donors is to do it anonymously, it is because there is a serious problem with the system."