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WOR News Talk Radio 710 HD



Donor's Medical History is Crucial Component to Child's Health

Dana Hildner Reporting

Parents who conceive children through sperm donation are dealing with more genetic and health issues than they initially planned. The problem is people are developing a false sense of security from a medical form that was filled out. These forms are a snapshot of the donor's day and may not be aware of their own medical or genetic history.

WOR's Joan Hamburg talks to Wendy Kramer, [Director and Founder of the Donor Sibling Registry](#), who developed the registry in order to make sure that there is a relationship between donor and family.

Most sperm banks do not keep track of the donors or how many children were created with that sperm. Without records, there is no way for the donor to update their medical history if newly developed diseases were to have formed.

"There is no comprehensive genetic and medical testing of the sperm donors. Some banks test some donors for some things, so you're not even sure what they have been tested for", says Kramer.

According to research, most donors donate to multiple sperm banks.

"The sperm banks do not keep record of how many children are born from any one donor. There are

donors out there with 20, 50, 100 kids because no one is accurately keeping records of the children being born. It is completely out of control”, Kramer adds.

More often than not, kids who are products of donation end up with more serious, genetic diseases. In this day in age, there is no reason for donors to not get tested.

“Diseases that there are cheap tests - with genetic testing at \$199 - there is no reason for these donors not to be fully tested.” Kramer says.

Although there is required testing for HIV and STDs, that is not enough. The only solution is to include genetic testing. At costs being at \$200, upping the price would be beneficial to the child and the family in the long run.

Banks are still selling sperm that was donated up to 20 years ago, and there is no way to trace the donor. There is no regulation and no oversight.

Donors who find out later on that they are diagnosed with a genetic disease try to call the bank in which they donated to in order to notify them, but banks say that it is out of their hands. It all comes down to accurate record keeping of the medical history of the donor and how many kids were produced from the donor’s sperm.

“When you have a sperm donor with the same disease, who might again only pass it to half of his children, half of his children could be 50-100 kids. So you are talking more of an epidemic at that point,” Kramer concludes.

The focus needs to be more on the health of the child and not the fears of the parents. Openness and honesty is the best solution when you are choosing a donor.

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