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Donor Registry Allows IVF Conceived Children to Unite with Biological "Donor" Parents and Siblings

Anonymous sperm donation creating social problems for children conceived in labs

By Hilary White

August 29, 2008 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The increasing popularity of in vitro fertilisation, particularly that of anonymous sperm donation, is creating social problems for children who have been conceived from the faceless laboratory unions of "donors". Created in 2000, the Donor Sibling Registry is one resource, begun privately, for people created in labs to help them trace their genetic ancestry. Currently, the US and Canada have no publicly-funded facilities that allow people to trace their "donors".

The National Catholic Register spoke to two young people who were conceived artificially and had no idea, until they registered with the non-profit company, that they were siblings. Eighteen-year-old Ryan and 14-year-old Anna were conceived by artificial insemination. Ryan's mother, Wendy Kramer, co-founder of the Colorado-based Registry, told the Register, "Ryan calls Anna his sister, and he thinks of her that way. It's a new kind of family. It's hard to define."

Kramer wrote on the group's website, "No public outlet exists for mutual consent contact between people born from anonymous sperm donation." Currently the Registry database includes an active membership of 14,241 with matches between more than 5694 half-siblings or "donors". The total number of registrants, including children, is currently at 22,175.

"Egg, sperm or embryo donors who are willing to have contact with the children born as a result of their donations are very welcome!" the group's website says.

While steadfastly refusing to acknowledge that "donors" equals "parents" when speaking of artificial procreation, legislators debating Canada's Assisted Human Reproduction bill attempted to address the need for children conceived by these methods to have reasonable access to information regarding their genetic origins.

One of the many objections made by pro-life advocates opposed to such legalisation and proliferation of artificial procreation was that children conceived artificially by "donors", instead of naturally by parents, would face traumatic reactions later in life.

The Register quotes a study by Cambridge University that supports their assertions. The study recommended telling children of their procreative origins as early as possible.

"Finding out at age 23 was earth-shattering," one respondent said. "I have so many questions and realize now that I may never learn more about the man who helped to create me."

While the US allows anonymous sperm donation, some countries, such as the UK, have banned it because of the problems it creates for the offspring. In the years since artificial procreation has become widely used, dozens of lawsuits have been launched over the various dilemmas created by the practice. Recently, in a ruling that reflected biological realities, a judge in New Mexico ruled that a "sperm donor" was liable for child support payments.

Since 2005, British children conceived by artificial methods have the legal right to know their biological parentage at the age of 18. That year, British news carried the story of a 15 year-old boy who had tracked down his biological father by taking a sample of his own DNA to a private genealogy DNA-testing service.

With the change in law, the number of donors dropped in the UK, prompting complaints that it had made it more difficult to "create a family" by artificial means.

With the Human Fertilisation and Embryology bill pending in the House of Commons, pro-life and pro-family advocates continue to warn that the law will further undermine the natural family, the foundation of civil society. Amendments to the bill proposed at the committee stage will remove the requirement of IVF facilities to take into account the need of a child to have a father. This was the result of lobbying by the homosexualist movement to allow homosexuals to procure children more easily.

Religious people have long objected that the various means of artificial procreation have erased the natural connection between marriage and procreation. As early as 1986, the Vatican issued a landmark document, *Donum Vitae*, that explained in detail the ethical objections. These included the weakening of the marriage bond by having children produced by third party "donors", as well as the reduction of the child to a form of commercial commodity.

URL: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2008/aug/08082907.html>

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