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## Offspring wonder: Who's our daddy?

**SUE MONTGOMERY**

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'They just want to know where they come from'

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Wendy Kramer posted a message on Yahoo five years ago looking for California Cryobank sperm donor #1058 - the man who provided the Y chromosome for her son Ryan.

She never found him, but that one message has grown into a wildly popular website with more than 6,000 members that could have a huge impact on how family is defined.

They are donors looking for their offspring, offspring searching for their donors, and half-siblings and parents looking for people who used the same donor.

In just over two years, there have been 1,178 matches, including 20 offspring from a single donor.

"They are strangers but they are bonded in a pretty profound way," Kramer said in an interview from Denver, Colo.

"People say that these children want to find their donors because they want money or they want a dad, but they don't want either," she said.

"They just want their questions answered and they want to know where they came from."

Many donors wish to remain anonymous, although Britain now requires that all donors reveal their identity once the offspring turns 18.

Janet Shaw, a Toronto single mother, went on Kramer's site looking for connections to donor #BJM9787 - whose sperm was pricier than others because the donor agreed to reveal his identity once Shaw's 10-month-old son turns 18.

Shaw found three women drawn to him: one was pregnant, the other was thinking of using him and was looking for advice, and the third was trying to get pregnant with his sperm.

"And there are others out there," said Shaw, who didn't want her real name used.

In Canada, there is no limit to the number of offspring per donor, but there are restrictions on the amount of a particular donor's sperm shipped to a geographical area.

For example, the Toronto sperm bank Rachel Clarkson is dealing with told her that one donor, who had helped produce 11 children, had reached his limit in the Waterloo, Ont., area.

Sperm banks usually follow the American Society of Reproductive Medicine's recommendation of 25 pregnancies for a population of 800,000. But only 20 per cent of

inseminations actually result in a baby.

"We don't want 50 babies in Toronto with the same donor," said Haimant Bissessar, vice-president of CAN-AM Cryo Services Corp., the Canadian sperm distributor for Fairfax Cryobank. "But the reporting from both patients and clinics is very low."

U.S. sperm banks limit the number of offspring per donor to 40 worldwide. But since there is no obligation to report the birth of a sperm baby to the bank, there is no sure way of keeping track.

"They say they're limiting the numbers but I don't think they're telling the truth," Kramer said.

"I don't think they really know."

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