

## Open-Identity Sperm Donation: How Does Offering Donor-Identifying Information Relate to Donor-Conceived Offspring's Wishes and Needs?

Marja Visser · Monique H. Mochtar · Fulco van der Veen

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We read the article “Open-Identity Sperm Donation: How Does Offering Donor-Identifying Information Relate to Donor-Conceived Offspring's Wishes and Needs?” (Ravelingien, Provoost, and Pennings 2015) with interest and fully agree with the authors that we know too little about the social and psychological effects of open-identity donation and the needs and wishes of donor-conceived (DC) offspring.

However, we do object to their statement:

That the donor, at the time of donation, is willing to share his identity does not necessarily mean that he will be willing to meet the DC offspring so many years later. Therefore, it would be more appropriate in the debate to talk about “donor contactability” rather than about “donor identifiability.” (508)

We find this statement suggestive and not underpinned by the evidence the authors found in the literature. In this letter we will explain why we think this is the case.

First, this statement does not follow from the study purpose which was to analyse the published empirical data on DC offspring's reasons for wanting to know (more about) their sperm donor. This illustrates the

dangers of failing to carefully frame a research question and test a null hypothesis.

Second, what is the meaning of the study purpose? Is the study intended to answer the question—“what are the reasons for wanting *to know the donor*”? Or the question—“what are the reasons for wanting to *know more about* the donor”? Or the question—“what are the reasons why DC offspring want to know *the identity* of their sperm donor”? If we assume that all three questions are part of the study purpose, we feel that the reviewed articles of Turner and Coyle (2000), Jadva et al. (2009, 2010), and Mahlstedt et al. (2010) do not address these. The articles of Turner and Coyle, and of Jadva et al., pertain to what it means to be a donor offspring and what their identity experiences are (Turner and Coyle 2000; Jadva et al. 2009) and the article of Mahlstedt et al. examines views of DC offspring about sperm donation (Mahlstedt et al. 2010).

Third, six of the ten reviewed articles indeed reveal data meeting with the study purpose, but to our surprise none of these findings were mentioned in the review. We noticed that 69 per cent and 86 per cent respectively of DC offspring were curious about their donor (Jadva et al. 2009; Scheib, Riordan, and Rubin 2005); 16 per cent, 76 per cent, 83 per cent, and 45 per cent respectively of DC offspring wanted to meet their donor (Jadva et al. 2010; Mahlstedt et al. 2010; Scheib, Riordan, and Rubin 2005; Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, and Brewaeys 2001); 67 per cent, 82 per cent, and 83 per cent respectively of DC offspring wanted contact with their donor (Scheib, Riordan, and Rubin 2005; Beeson, Jennings, and Kramer 2011; Hertz, Nelson, and Kramer

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M. Visser (✉) · M. H. Mochtar · F. van der Veen  
Academic Medical Centre, University of Amsterdam, Center for Reproductive Medicine, Meibergdreef 9, Amsterdam, Noord-Holland 1105 AZ, The Netherlands  
e-mail: m.visser@amc.uva.nl

2013); 7 per cent, 33 per cent, 76 per cent, 33 per cent, and 82 per cent respectively of DC offspring wanted a relationship with the donor (Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, and Brewaeys 2003; Scheib, Riordan, and Rubin 2005; Mahlstedt et al. 2010; Beeson, Jennings, and Kramer 2011; Hertz, Nelson, and Kramer 2013).

Following these objections, we cannot agree with the conclusion that the analysis shows that “for nearly all of the empirically reported reasons behind DC offspring’s wish to know their sperm donor, access to the donor’s identity is not necessary” (508).

What we need to increase our knowledge on the social and psychological effects of open-identity donation and the needs and wishes of DC offspring and open-identity donors, is to conduct longitudinal studies on the experiences, wishes, and needs of DC offspring. We invite the authors to join forces to do so.

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