

URGE for Progeny Stronger than traditions?

Socio-culture aspects of using donor semen in developing countries

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Objectives

- Urge for progeny in natural conception and ART.
- Why using donor semen in DC?
- Socio-cultural religious aspects of sperm donation.
- Conclusion.

Charlie Chaplin is as much remembered today for his fertility as for his comedy. He had 11 children in total, the last fathered when he was 73 .

ART including A1 expanded the period of time possible to satisfy the urge for progeny through cryopreservation and gamete donation.

However debates at numerous commissions, committees and professional organizations, influenced by the public, resulted in creation of medically and legally binding guidelines and /or legislations to be followed in a particular country.

These guidelines and legislations reflect distinct national, cultural, philosophical and religious traditions in a given sovereign state.

However in some countries ART including AI is practiced with practically no legislations or binding guidelines.

Because the urge for progeny is stronger than traditions, a number of infertile couples may cross borders to countries where ART including AI practices are more easily available to them.

Thus a country like India is now gaining the reputation of being the developing world epicenter of reproductive tourism.

Case I

- *Maria del Carmen Bousada 66 Year old Spanish single woman.*
- *2006 Gave birth to twin boys in Cadiz, Spain.*
- *Had IVF in Los Angeles claiming to be 55.*
- *Paid \$ 20,000 in Cash for IVF.*
- *Right after birth she reported to had been diagnosed with cancer.*
- *She died July 2009.*

Case II

- Mr. Omkari Panwar*
- *70 years old Muslim Indian mother of two daughters and grandmother to five.*
 - *2008 gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl by CS in Muzaffarnagar, India.*
 - *Husband Charan Singh Panwar 77 year old paid for IVF treatment by selling his buffalos, mortgaging his land, spending his life savings and taking out a credit loan.*
 - *The sole reason was to have a male heir.*

Celebrities

- **Actress Nicole Kidman had a baby at the age of 41 years.**
- **The American model Cheryl Tiegs at the age of 52 had twins.**
- **Egyptian Actress Hala Sedki at age? above fifty had a baby.**

Why using Donor Semen?

A. Medical:

- Treatment of Infertility.

B. Psycho-Social:

- Single women desiring a child.
- Lesbian Couples.
- Advanced Paternal age.

Contrary to developed countries, in developing countries requests for sperm donation are still common because of the high cost and limited availability and access to micromanipulation ART technology.

Provision of IVF/ICSI service

1- Optimal utilization	1500 cycle/mppy
2- Europe	1115 cycle/mppy
3- Developing countries	60-200 cycle
4- Latin America	33-109 cycle/mppy

Zopes-hochschild F et al., Hum. Reprod. 2008, doi:10.1093/humrep/den 151.
Adamson GD et al., Fertil & Steril 2006, 85, 1586-1622. Nigren K et al., Hum Reprod, den 218, Andersen NA et al., 2009, 24, 6, 1267-1287.

*Psychosocial indications
are not common
indications for donor
semen in developing
countries for various
socio cultural reasons.*

***Socio-cultural
religious Aspects
of using donor semen***

*In many developing countries
Socio-culture and religion
still have a powerful meaning
and greatly influence
behavior, ethical practices
and policymaking in these
countries.*

Serour G. I., 2008 RMB online, 17, suppl 3, 34-38.
Serour G.I., 2005 Midd East Fertil & Steril J. 10, 185-190.

**In developing countries
childbirth and rearing are
regarded as family
commitments of both partners
and not just biological and
social functions.**

Serour GI, 2008 RBM on line 17 Supp 3, 34-48.
Serour GI, 2008 Hum Reprod ESHRE Monographs J;u 34-42 dio:doi 10.10931
Humrep/den 143

*The social status of women,
their dignity and self-esteem
are closely related to their
procreation potentials. The
society puts pressure on women
to mother children even if the
male partner is the cause of
infertility.*

Gender biased sufferings in childlessness

- Frustration, anxiety and grief.
- Marital distress.
- Domestic violence.
- Economic deprivation.
- Social stigma.
- Community Ostracism.
- Polygamy.
- Divorce.
- Life threatening infections as HIV/AIDS*.

Serour G. I. 2002 in Vayena E et al., current practices and Controversies in ART who, Geneva 41-49.
* Inhorn MC, 2009 Int. J. GO. WRWH 2009, 106, 172-174.
Rutstein SO & Shah I H 2004, DHS Comp. Reports N O 0 WHO, Geneva
* Ombelet W, 2009, Focus on Reproduction, ESHR January PP 21.

Couples and women particularly may seek sperm donation to achieve pregnancy and childbirth to overcome the socio-cultural pressure of their society.

*Religious aspects
Judaism*

The Mishnah emphasizes that only prohibitive, strict decisions requires juridicial substantiation while permissibility or leniency needs no supportive precedent.

According to the Jewish law sperm donation is prohibited because of:

- Incest .**
- Prohibition against masturbation.**
- Lack of genealogy.**
- Problem of inheritance.**

All Jewish legal experts agree that sperm donation using the semen of a Jewish donor is forbidden.

Some rabbinical authorities permit sperm donation when the donor is non-Jew.

However, most rabbis agree that using donor semen, without intercourse being involved and with the knowledge and consent of the husband the woman is not guilty of adultery and is not prohibited to cohabit with her husband.

In recent years, conservative Judaism leadership has come to accept the legitimacy of semen donation with the consent of the husband as a final alternative when nothing else has helped.

Christianity

Christianity does not speak with one voice on the technology of ART and AI. What some would permit and regulate, others would forbid.

Rome, as it puts absolute value on an unbreakable nexus between coitus and conception, forbids to its members all practices of ART including AI which bypass the sexual union of man and woman.

Roman Catholic Church Pope Pius XII-1956.

The Anglican Church is liberal on the use of ART and allows semen collection by means of masturbation. However, it forbids use of donor gametes, semen or oocyte from a third party.

*The Church of Scotland
opposed the donation of sperm
and of ova, surrogacy and sex
selection except to prevent the
transmission of inherited
disease.*

The Talbert 250, 8130
1st June 1996, P.741

*The church of
Alexandria encouraged
the use of ART for
infertile married couples.
It forbids sperm
donation, egg donation,
embryo donation and
surrogacy.*

Gregorios, 1989

Islam

*If ART including AI is
indicated in a couple
(H&W) as a necessary line
of treatment it is permitted
and even encouraged as it
preserves humankind.*

Sunni Guidelines

All Fatwas FINALLY agreed to the following guidelines :

- No mixing of genes.

- No sperm donation.

- No egg donation.

- No embryo donation.

- No surrogacy ±.

If the marriage contract has come to an end because of divorce or death of the husband, insemination cannot be performed on the female partner even using sperm cells from former husband.

Serour GI, 2008 RBM on line 17 Supp 3, 34-48.

Shi'aa Guidelines

have “opened” the way to a third-party donation, via Fatwa from Ayatollah Ali Hussein Khomeini in 1999. this Fatwa allowed third-party participation including egg donation, sperm donation, embryo donation and surrogacy.

Recently, there has been some concern about sperm donation among Shi'aa and most scholars today forbid sperm donation.

Confucianism & Buddhism

Confucians and Buddhists considered infertility as a retribution for wrong doing either by the man, the woman or even their ancestors who might have led an immoral life.

Ren-Zong Qim,2002

In general any intervention in natural reproduction is not desirable because it disturbs the *dao* of nature. However, disturbing the *dao* of nature is more acceptable than being without an offspring.

Though Sperm Donation is accepted by traditional Chinese, Chinese men are reluctant to donate sperm because they think sperm contains *jing* or *yuan qi* which are indispensable for their health and life.

HINDU

Kinship and family ties depend on progeny.

A woman is considered “complete” or “real” only when she becomes a mother.

There are no laws regarding misuse/use of ART, donor eggs and sperm, or surrogacy in India.

Patients and physicians alike believe that regulation should suit the needs of every one.

Conclusions

Sperm donation to create a child raises a number of medical, ethical as well as social, religious, and legal issues which may conflict with the reproductive choice and individual's urge for progeny.

Reproductive Tourism is unlikely to disappear. Couples travel with a prio autonomy and for a necessity not for fun as tourists and we owe our patients the respect they deserve.

If the physician has a conscientious objection to an evidence based treatment, it is an ethical obligation to refer the couple to where their needs can be met, physicians cannot and should not maintain a high level of paternalism.

FIGO Ethics Committee 2006. Int JGO, 29: 333-334.
Serour GI, 2008 RBM on line 17 Supp 3, 34-48.

***Thank
You***
