

This response was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on Give and take? Human bodies in medicine and research between April 2010 and July 2010. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

Question 1

ANSWER:

My area of interest in this paper is solely to do with egg and sperm donation. I have been a recipient of sperm donation. I am a UK citizen currently in Canada. Canada no longer allows payment for sperm donation. As a consequence, there is virtually NO supply in Canada. Change of policy - end of supply. I spoke to my MD at the time of my initial consultation. She was quite upset. In the past five years, the supply has all but vanished. So, I crossed the border in Seattle. I chose California Cryobank in the US and had my procedure done in the US as it is too difficult to transport sperm across the border. Have you had a look at California's cryobank website (www.cryobank.com). There is a wonderful supply and plethora of choices. The US allows and encourages payment for sperm - subsequently it has a solid stream of supply. If you look at the demographics: primarily young college kids looking for extra cash, of the age of majority, etc. It's a real win win. My donor was 'open'. He willingly chose to have his identity revealed at the age of majority of my child. So, it is hardly like he is hiding his identity. There is a surge of women just like me. Highly educated, career driven, who for whatever reason require sperm donors at this point in their life. It seems like we are being punished for not getting pregnant at 16 and going on welfare. Whether it is religious (fruitcakes), moral tut-tutters - I don't care. The fact that some body decided that paying young men to donate their tissue was wrong was a DISASTER for Canada. No more supply. Or, because of such hypo or limited supply, the men that do supply are donors that I would not choose to have as the father of my child anyway. Have any of you folks looked at basic economics? Do any of you have a basic understanding of how the commercial world works? If you read the reason why the young men donate it is (1) to make money and (2) to help people out. Note the order. If the decision of the Canadian council was to destroy the supply of sperm in Canada: they succeeded. Congrats. What the heck anyway? And who are all these people deciding whether two informed adults can choose to help each other out and receive compensation for their efforts. Get the heck out of my personal choices. I will tell you who they are: they are the ones with kids of their own. Thanks

Question 2

ANSWER:

I am only responding to egg and sperm donation here: no.

Question 3

ANSWER:

No. As long as they have made the choices in life and their choice is respected after death. (Or, their legal guardian in the case of incapacitation).

Question 6

ANSWER:

Sure. But, that is their decision and as adults, they should be able to make those choices and in the case of sperm donation, receive compensation. If you look at the demographics of who actually makes compensation in an open market it is primarily young men who are at university looking for extra cash. It is NOT people who are interested in saving the world(although there are some of those as well, however the great majority are not). The money encourages and rewards people for selling something of value: their tissue without any harm to themselves (again, assuming that they are adults and capable of making an ethical decision - which is the case).

Question 9

ANSWER:

I most certainly hope that someone's religious beliefs as to what their God or Goddess or water born deity tells them will have absolutely no effect on my life options.

Question 14

ANSWER:

What a weighted question. How about sex workers or drugs? I do not think that is a valid question here. For my purpose (as I am only addressing the donation of sperm and egg tissue), the question is, is it right to meet demand. Let me reverse the question, is it right not to? Two adults capable of making an ethical decision without harm to themselves or society as a whole: is that wrong? I see that demand for sperm and egg tissue is a spiralling and increasing demand due to the pressures on women in the society that we live in. Simply put, you can't 'make it' until you are almost 40 now. In that case, women have to choose (and it is women who bear the brunt of this) between career and family. Men certainly do not. Also, most women are totally ignorant of the precipitous decline in fertility after about 42 - there is a lacuna of information out there and many of my peer group (as above) are drifting obliviously along without understanding that they are making a tremendously important decision: simply by not making it in time. So, yes sperm and egg donation is important and increasingly so today. It is an important 'demand' that has been created by a society pushing men and women to equally bear the cost of their education and life with career options, while not equally apportioning the 'cost' between them.

Question 16

ANSWER:

No.

Question 18**ANSWER:**

Yes, my target supply - young men of college age are not interested in indirect compensation. They are looking for cash. As mentioned previously, I am a UK national currently in Canada who had to go to the US as Canada has recently blocked the payment of donation for sperm. No payment, no more sperm. The supply of sperm has almost vanished and those paltry few who do, would not be my first choice. So, I went to the US where I had a plethora of options to choose from. Needless to say, choosing to have a child and raise him/her for 20 years is a tremendous responsibility and any women who says that decision is taken lightly is quite frankly lying to you. If you want to have supply of sperm, you will need to have a cash incentive. Look at what happened in Canada? They blocked the payment for the donation of sperm and the supply fell precipitously. Again, perhaps they council in charge (most likely by religious folks), most likely wanted to reduce or minimise the supply of sperm - congrats it worked. If you want supply brought to market, you need to have a price. Have any of you read basic economics? Or are you all just 'hoping' that it will miraculously happen. The Canadian case indicates just the opposite (as will almost every other supply / demand type incident). Indirect compensation to that target market: the ones that actually provide the primarily supply of the product of interest to me (sperm tissue) are not driven by indirect compensation. Thanks

Question 30**ANSWER:**

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