

**Breakout session 2:
Donation for research**

**Gamete donation and
healthy volunteers in clinical trials**

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What is donated?

Gametes and embryos

- Sperm used for research on fertility; eggs & embryos used more widely
- 850 eggs (falling) & 3300 embryos (stable) donated in 2006
- Motivations: left-over or unsuitable for treatment, 'egg sharing' & interest in research

Healthy volunteers in clinical trials

- 200+ trials a year to test medicines in humans
- Recruitment not a problem
- Motivations: mainly payment but also interest in research

Current policy

Gametes and embryos

- ‘Effective’ consent required: information, counselling, opportunity to withdraw
- Lost earnings covered up to £250, payment not allowed (apart from ‘egg sharing’ – rung 5)

Healthy volunteers in clinical trials

- Valid consent required plus REC scrutiny: information, interview
- Direct payment allowed as incentive – rung 6

Ethical considerations

- **Welfare** of the donor is the most important consideration
- Not every form of **payment** implies body parts are ‘things’ to be bought and sold
- Donation for **research** differs in important ways to donation for **treatment**
- If primary motivation is to contribute to society, then society should recognise that contribution – issues of justice become more important

Payment for healthy volunteers in clinical trials?

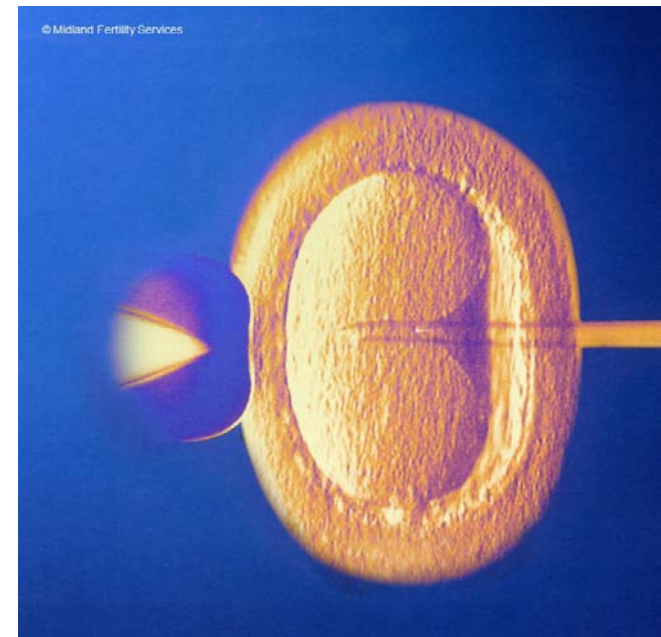
Factors to consider:

1. Welfare? Ethical scrutiny keeps risks low but danger of over-volunteering
 2. Threat to common good? No
 3. Healthcare professionals? Unlikely to compromise professional values
- The registration of healthy volunteers on a **national database** should be compulsory in order to limit the harms of over-volunteering
 - We suggest a consultation on lifetime limit

Payment to egg donors?

Factors to consider before moving to non-altruist-focused intervention:

1. Welfare? Could encourage **repeat donation**, but no future child to consider
2. Threat to common good?
Unlikely
3. Risk of undermining professional values? Little evidence



Recommendations: eggs for research

- Suggest the introduction of a pilot scheme offering **payment** (above expenses) to those who donate eggs for research
- We call for better welfare protection for egg donors via:
 - A **national register** of gamete donors
 - **Limits** on repeat egg donations (and research on long-term health effects)
 - Guards against inappropriate targeting of egg donors from **abroad**