

Prohibiting sperm donor anonymity could reduce the number of donors

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A new study published in the *Journal of Law and the Biosciences* suggests that prohibiting anonymous sperm donation would result in a decline in the number of donors, and that those willing to donate would likely demand compensation for donation.

Movements to legally prohibit sperm [donor](#) anonymity have succeeded in many European countries and Australia, whereas [sperm donor](#) anonymity remains the norm in the United States.

Most countries that have prohibited sperm donor anonymity legally require all sperm donors to put identifying information into a registry available to the donor-conceived children at age 18. As a result, those who donated sperm (or eggs or embryos) after a certain date are, by law, identifiable. Any person born as a result of donation is entitled to request and receive the donor's name and last known address, once he reaches the age of 18.

Researchers here conducted an experiment to assess the effect of a change in donor identification rules. The study was administered from June 15, 2013 to August 15, 2013 using a sample of active and inactive donors from a large cryobank in the United States. A staff member at the bank sent an invitation to participate in a research study and offered a 15\$ Amazon gift card for participating in the study.

Researchers sent the questionnaire to 67 active donors and 204 inactive donors; of these people, all 67 active responded to the questionnaire, while 94 inactive donors responded. Of the 161 respondents in the sample, 90 were anonymous donors and 71 were ID donors.

The data suggests that moving to a mandatory donor identification system could lead to roughly 29% of participants refusing to donate. The remaining donors would demand an average \$60

(anywhere from \$40 to \$102) more per donation.

An estimated decline in the number of participants of close to 30% may have economic implications for the market for sperm donation—both in terms of the potential costs of maintaining an adequate level of donor supply and/or the quality of the samples provided.

While the U.S. market is currently experiencing an excess supply of donors and inventory, these excesses vary considerably across racial and ethnic groups. Moreover, the vast majority of American males have not considered donating and of the ones that do, only roughly 1/200 applicants makes it through the rigorous screening process.

"Donor-conceived children across the world have clamored for the right to have identifying information on their sperm and [egg donors](#)," said author Glenn Cohen. "To understand whether systems requiring the sharing of that information are a good policy, we need considerable data on the effects of such law changes and our study fills that gap."

More information: "Sperm Donor Anonymity and Compensation: An Experiment with American Sperm Donors" *Journal of Law and the Biosciences* (2016). DOI: [10.1093/jlb/lsw052](https://doi.org/10.1093/jlb/lsw052) , [academic.oup.com/DocumentLibra ... PR_Papers/lsw052.pdf](https://academic.oup.com/DocumentLibra...PR_Papers/lsw052.pdf)

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