

What motivates men to donate sperm online?

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A new QUT study has looked at the motivations of men who donate sperm online. Credit: Queensland University of Technology

A world-first QUT study into online sperm donor behaviour has revealed the importance men place on their family, friends and the risks associated with donation, has little impact on their motivation or psychology when choosing to donate their sperm to women they meet online.

"Online [sperm](#) donors: The impact of family, friends, personality and risk perception on behavior," by QUT behavioural economists Stephen Whyte, David Savage and Benno Torgler has just been published by leading international journal *Reproductive Biomedicine Online*.

"Globally more and more men and [women](#) are stepping away from clinical (medical) sperm donation environments and choosing to find each other through online connection websites such as the UK-based PrideAngel through which we conducted our study," said Mr Whyte, from the QUT Business School.

"The internet and the development of online connection websites means donors and women are no longer bound by logistical or national boundaries, or cultural, social, financial or even sexuality-based barriers that may have excluded them in the past.

"In developed economies, online dating, dating apps, social media and the wider internet are now socially acceptable global platforms for meeting a partner. The same can also be said about connection websites for women seeking sperm donors.

"Connection websites provide a setting in which men and women can communicate directly, reducing financial burdens and barriers that have existed previously. It also allows the men and women involved to freely negotiate their preferred donation and parenting arrangements.

"Yet even though these types of websites have tens of thousands of members globally, only a handful of studies have been conducted across the last decade looking into informal donor psychology and motivations.

"Our study is the first of its kind to analyse factors such as level and history of donation, risk concerns, number of women to whom donations are informally made, and the number of offspring generated."

Mr Whyte said that understanding the motivations of informal donors was critical in providing effective policy, equitable legislative frameworks, and frontline health and psychological support.

"Online sperm donation (compared with clinical settings) can provide both [donor](#) and recipient with more information about each other before the donation takes place. It also allows both parties to communicate and cooperate through the process and beyond," Mr Whyte said.

"Our results show donors who have previously been active in formal clinical settings (compared with those who exclusively donate informally) donate to more women in the informal market and generate more offspring.

"We also found that for informal donors the importance of family, friends and the risks associated has little impact on their motivations or psychology when choosing to donate their sperm to women they meet online.

"From a personality perspective, more conscientious informal donors have a comparative advantage, possibly because more conscientious men may be more efficient or organised in a market that requires increased cooperation and communication."

More information: Stephen Whyte et al. Online sperm donors: the impact of family, friends, personality and risk perception on behaviour, *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* (2017). DOI: [10.1016/j.rbmo.2017.08.023](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rbmo.2017.08.023)

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