

F-2013-00294 - Questions about the use of sperm donors by same sex couples and couples where one partner is transgendered

19 December 2013

Summary of request

The Authority was asked a number of questions regarding the use of sperm donors by same sex couples and couples in which one partner is transgendered.

HFEA response

Please find below the questions asked and their answers.

1. If two lesbians both seek to use the same sperm donor so that all the children within their one family unit are half or full siblings; is this considered as one family unit with respect to the ten family limit? I.e. could both women be treated with the same donor and use only one pregnancy slot?

In 2006 the HFEA introduced the ten family limit policy with no limit on the number of siblings which can be created in each separate family. In 2011 this policy was reviewed and it was agreed to retain the current limit.

The Authority set the limit at ten based on the perceived social and psychological interests of donors and donor conceived people in maintaining a relatively small number of siblings/children. It is also there to minimize the possibility of two children from the same donor having a consanguineous relationship with each other without knowing they are genetically related.

In terms of the HFEA's definition of a 'family', two women in a partnership with one another and their respective children would be considered as one family. In light of this, a separated same sex couple (each seeking to have further children) would be considered as one family.

The rationale behind this is most relevant when examined from the point of view of ensuring that further children of each of the women will be genetic half or full siblings of the existing children. The children would form a genetic extended family. It is felt that in terms of the lesser concern of consanguinity, as one would presume the children of the family would be known to one another, there would be no increased risk in this case.

2. We would like to know how many same sex couples have been treated in the UK each year, for as far back as you have records. We are interested in:

- a. Women registered with female partners having IUI in the private sector
- b. Women registered with female partners having IUI in the public sector
- c. Women registered with female partners having IVF/ICSI in the private sector
- d. Women registered with female partners having IVF/ICSI in the public sector
- e. Men registered with male partners using commissioned surrogates
- f. Couples having treatment when one partner is transgendered (where known)

Please see the attachment below. With regards to questions 2.a and 2.b, data is collected for IUI in terms of the treatment only, and not the gender of the couples. The second table in the attachment provides a breakdown of DI treatments, which is the closest that the HFEA can manage.

Questions 2.c and 2.d have been answered in the first table of the attachment below.

With regards to questions 2.e, the information collected by the Authority for surrogacy is not sufficient to provide the data that has been requested, so unfortunately an answer to this cannot be provided.

Question 2.f is also unanswerable. This is because the Authority collects information on the gender of patients at the time of treatment, and not whether they have changed gender during their life.

- [Tables showing data for IVF and DI treatment for same sex couples](#) (xls 31KB)