

Privacy vs Secrecy in Gamete Donation

Privacy

Honest, trusting relationship between parents and child

Child has right to know its true genetic information

Avoids trauma of finding out at a later date, either by planned disclosure or a 'slip'

Avoids trauma of finding out based on medical necessity or results of genetic testing

Research leaning toward psychological benefits to child

Several countries have enacted laws or are considering doing so

Perceived Benefits and Potential Risks of Secrecy

No need to tell (unlike adoption) because there is a pregnancy

Avoids possible stigma to child or parents due to unique circumstances of conception

Avoids possible frustration to child of not having access to information or donor

No research to suggest that children are harmed by not being informed

At this time, studies indicate that a significant majority of recipient parents do not plan to disclose to child even if they have disclosed to others

Child discovering this information on their own that can create a crisis in the family, wherein the child feels betrayed and trust is violated. This can occur in many ways including:

- Advances in computing that make anonymity unlikely to impossible. Just the smallest bit of information can allow someone to be found via internet searches. Browsing history is easily traceable via IP addresses
- Biometric recognition software and DNA identification and analysis kits are becoming increasingly sophisticated and accessible to the general public
- Needing to tell the child due to a health crisis in the non-genetic parent and the child wondering if they are carrying the genetic predisposition toward that same diagnosis, prompting either expensive and needless genetic testing or disclosure at the same time that the family is managing a stressful health crisis.