



Sperm-donor father of 43 children passed on genetic disorder

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COPENHAGEN, September 25, 2012 (LifeSiteNews.com) – A Danish man who fathered 43 children at 14 different IVF clinics in ten different countries by donating sperm, passed on a genetic disorder to at least five babies born from IVF procedures, it has been revealed. The man was allowed to continue donating, despite national rules in Denmark restricting donors to 25 times.

It is not known how many of the children have developed the nerve disorder Neurofibromatosis type I, a condition that causes non-cancerous tumours to grow around nerves, resulting in scoliosis, learning difficulties, eye problems, and epilepsy.

The clinic, Nordisk Cryobank, admitted that the incident was a result of inadequate testing.

Clinic director general, Peter Bower, told AFP that Denmark's rules regarding confidentiality prevented him from giving information on the children's age or nationalities. A Swedish national news service, however, revealed that at least 18 children in Sweden and Norway have been conceived using sperm from the same man, identified as "donor 7042".

The clinic has admitted they knew as early as 2009 that at least one of the children born from the man's sperm had been diagnosed with the disease, but had failed to act. "Our team of physicians and our geneticist looked at the case but didn't consider there to be reason enough to suspect it was the donor and therefore no reason to stop the use of his sperm," Bower said.

The Danish national health service has responded by reducing the number of times a single person can donate sperm to 12, to come into effect October 1st.

Since the proliferation of artificial methods of reproduction like in vitro fertilisation, legislatures around the world have struggled to keep up with the ethical and practical problems these practices have created. The Catholic Church **has been clear** that nearly all the artificial procreation techniques now commonly offered commercially **are "gravely evil,"** either because they deprive the child of the right to be conceived and born naturally within their biological families or merely because they deprive many of the children created of their lives.

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Despite the fact that there are between 30,000-60,000 children born annually through sperm donation in the United States, no national body is charged with the task of keeping track of who is related to whom.

A **2010 study** by the Commission on Parenthood found connections between sperm donation and long-term problems with depression, delinquency, and substance abuse. Titled, "My Daddy's Name is Donor: A New Study of Young Adults Conceived Through Sperm Donation," the study found that young people conceived through artificial means are "more confused, and feel more isolated from their families" than children born through natural means.

Two-thirds of those surveyed agreed, 'My sperm donor is half of who I am.' About half said they are disturbed that money was involved in their conception. More than half said that when they see someone who resembles them they wonder if they are related. Nearly half say they have feared being attracted to or having sexual relations with someone to whom they are unknowingly related, the study found.

Further, two thirds said that donor offspring have a right to know about their origins, a right that is so far not upheld by the law.

"About half of donor offspring have concerns about or serious objections to donor conception itself, even when parents tell their children the truth," the study said.

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