

# HOW DO GAMETE DONORS REACT WHEN THEY ARE CONTACTED BY SOMEONE BORN FROM THEIR DONATION ?

## CONTEXT

Until the beginning of the 21st century, **gamete donations** were mostly done **anonymously**: donors, recipients, and donor-conceived people were not supposed to know each other. However, new tools allowing donor-conceived people to identify donors have emerged (new laws and official registers, commercial DNA tests...), and **anonymity is no longer guaranteed**.

So, how do donors feel about being **contacted** by people conceived from their donation?

## METHODS

Interviews were conducted with **15 sperm donors** and **12 egg donors**. Their donations took place between the 1970s and 2010s in the United States, Australia, and Canada.

None of the participants knew the recipients of the donation before donating. Most donated **anonymously** (21 out of 27), but a few agreed to **open their identity** to some recipients at the time of donation (6). However, the vast majority **did not have frequent contact** with the donor-conceived people or their families after donating.

## WHAT GAMETE DONORS TOLD US

Although most were surprised, they generally report positive reactions to the contact initiated by the donor-conceived people. Various issues emerge from these reactions.



### FACING THE UNKNOWN

The contact opens up an **unknown horizon** for gamete donors, which can prompt **fears** or **caution**.

- Who is the donor-conceived person contacting them? What is their personality like?
- What is their family context: are their parents aware of the contact? Do they agree?
- What are their expectations regarding the contact: are they just seeking information, or do they want to develop a relationship?



### SEEING THE OUTCOME OF THEIR DONATION

Several donors did not know if their donations had led to births, because of the anonymity rule. With the contact, they saw for the first time **what their donation resulted in**.

Most express **curiosity** and **pride**. However, one person **regretted** learning that the people born from their donation had faced difficulties in their lives.



### BUILDING A NEW RELATIONSHIP?

For some donors, the contact sparked **enthusiasm**, even **hope**, at the idea of building a **new relationship** with people born from their donation. Some report that they have always wanted this to happen. Others say they are simply curious.



### BEING COERCED INTO CONTACT

Two participants reported that **contact** with people born from their donation **was made** by a family member, **against their will**. In both cases, the participants do not wish to interact with the donor-conceived people and feel like they are being coerced into it.

**Some people who donated their gametes anonymously respond positively when contacted by a donor-conceived person. These interactions raise issues related to the conditions in which the donation was made and/or the donors' situation at the time of contact. These factors must be considered if we want to understand the donors' perspective.**

