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Southern African Society for Reproductive
Medicine and Gynaecological Endoscopy

SASREG guidelines for Egg Donation agencies

Over the last few years there has been a proliferation of egg donation agencies in SA. These agencies have provided the opportunity for many couples to have children, who would otherwise remain childless. However there needs to be regulations to prevent unethical business practices from egg donor agencies. While these agencies offer a service within our society there is a danger that if unregulated, potential problems could arise which would place the practice of entire egg donation at risk.

Although there is good interaction between SASREG and donor agencies, the actions of donor agencies and any possible complaints related to their contracts with donors and recipient fall outside the responsibilities of SASREG as a Society.

Any complaints about the actions of Agencies should be reported to the Department of Health: For attention Mr Clayton. His Secretary Ms. Nastasya Parkers e mail address is - Nastasya.Parker@westerncape.gov.za

1. Advertising for egg donation

- a) Advertising and publicity materials should be designed and written with care. The wording of their advertising and marketing campaigns should take into consideration the sensitive issues involved in recruiting donors.
- b) Statements about "earning money" or "financial gain" should be avoided, but reference to reimbursements or compensation is acceptable. It is important to stress that ED is done for altruistic reasons.

2. Duty of egg donor agencies.

- a) The egg donor agencies should abide by the SASREG gamete donation guidelines as published in 2008 (SASREG), as well as all laws of South Africa on gamete donation: Chapter 8 on Artificial Fertilization of the National Health Act and regulations
- b) Information given to donors: Donors should be fully briefed about the process of egg donation by the agency, including the possible risks and side effects. The ultimate responsibility of the treatment stays however with the treating Specialist in Reproductive Medicine.
- c) Psychological assessment: All donors should undergo a psychological assessment prior to their first donation, or if their previous donation was more than 12 months ago, or if they experienced a major change in their life that can have an effect on the egg donation.
- d) Total donations. In order to protect their physical and reproductive health: Unless special permission by the Specialist in Reproductive Medicine, donors may not donate more than approximately 6 times.

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- e) A donor can legally not have more than 6 live births according to Chapter 8 on Artificial Fertilization of the National Health Act.
- f) Timing of donations: In order to protect their physical and reproductive health, egg donors should do not do more than approximately four egg donations within a twelve-month period. Back to back donations are not allowed.
- g) Anonymity: All donations taking place within Chapter 8 on Artificial Fertilization of the National Health Act South Africa, unless qualifying as a „known donation“ are to be anonymous. No identifying information will be passed between donor and recipient. This means that no adult photos of the donors will be shared with the recipient, and no meetings between donor and recipient will be allowed. ED agencies are however, allowed to show baby or child photos of the donor up until a maximum of age 10. No contact will be allowed between the donor and the potential child in the future.
- h) Donor profile: All donors should be mentally and physically healthy, have a BMI under 30, and should be under 35 years of age. While the legal age is 18 years, it is recommended that donors are at least 21 years old, unless specifically cleared by a psychologist.
- i) Egg donation agencies must always consider the health of the donor.
- j) Egg donation agencies must always give accurate information to the recipient couple regarding the health of the egg donor.
- k) No match can be confirmed between a recipient and a donor while she is still donating to another recipient.

3. SASREG

- a) Regular interaction between SASREG and the egg donor agencies is encouraged to ensure the best care is given to donors and to patients. If an agency needs further advice they are encouraged to seek advice from SASREG.

Donor Agencies who abide by the regulations as set out in this document, may advertise on their websites that they do work according to the ethics set out in the regulations by SASREG. It will however be the responsibility of each clinic's Director to ensure that the clinic deals only with agencies which abide by these guidelines.

4. Ownership of agencies:

Doctors, clinics, lawyers and other professionals should declare / be transparent about whether they have a financial, commercial or other relationship with the egg donor agency they refer patients to. Should a professional have a personal or financial interest in a specific egg donor agency, this should be declared upfront when the professional makes the recommendation for egg donation. The financial interest or commercial relationship between doctors, clinics, lawyers and other professionals and the agencies should be available in the public domain.

No individual that has a financial interest in the agency or an employee of an agency may be used as an oocyte donor.

5. Financial transactions:

- a) No financial transaction can occur between the egg donor and the agency. Only the fertility clinic can reimburse the donor.
- b) No financial transaction is allowed between a fertility clinic and an agency: referral fees or kickbacks are not allowed.
- c) An egg donation agency can charge the recipient couple an administrative fee for matching of the egg donor.

6. Travelling donors:

The agencies should not canvas donors who wish to travel nor facilitate the travelling of donors outside the Republic of South Africa. Donors are allowed to travel within the borders of South Africa in between different cities under the following conditions:

- a) The continuity of medical care is ensured. After the donation the donor needs to have easy access to a SASREG accredited clinic in case a complication occurs.
- b) Extra travelling costs can be charged to the recipient, however these costs must completely transparent to the recipient.