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Reproductive donation practice, policy and bioethics

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Reproductive Donation Practice, Policy and Bioethics**, Edited by Martin Richards, Guido Pennings and John B. Appleby. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, ISBN 978-0-521-18993-4

As the title intimates, this book provides coverage of the bioethical, policy and practice, and jurisdiction-dependent issues that arise with regards to reproductive donation. Utilising a multidisciplinary approach, the volume draws upon empirical research and ethical frameworks in its overview.

From the outset, the editor's introductory chapter of this edited collection begins by contending that, due to the transitional phase that reproductive donation is undergoing, "little is known about where this may lead us" (p.11); this book offers some useful insights into these changes. What follows, in chapter two, is a discussion of the biological aspects related to reproductive donation. Martin Johnson begins by making the distinction between donation practices; including the use of cryopreserved (frozen) material that is donated. He concludes the chapter with a consideration of the myths and scientific risks associated with reproductive donation. In chapter three the intersections between social science and bioethics are examined in some detail. This enables the reader to see the relationships between science, social science and bioethics. Robert Klitzman's chapter describes the way in which social science research, alongside ethics and science, can be utilised to enrich understandings of reproductive donation. These early chapters serve to further contextualise the ensuing discussions within the wider discourses related to reproductive donation. Further, the dialogues that follow are also located within the context of legislative frameworks, the practices associated with reproductive donation and the ethical and social issues applicable to the various treatments.

The wide array of topics covered includes an analysis of global perspectives and cultural diversity within the context of reproductive donation, the regulation of gamete donation (United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) perspectives), a legal analysis of gamete and embryo donation utilising a Spanish context, transnational donation from a legal and ethical regulatory perspective, the recruitment of gamete donors; balancing ethical criteria, intra-familial donation and its associated challenges, single parents utilising ARTs, and justice for gay and lesbian couples when using/accessing reproductive donation. There is also consideration of conception by donation, whether disclosure is in the best interests of the children, and the future implications with regards to identifiable donors and siblings, embryo donation and the ethical issues associated with this treatment option. Final considerations are given to surrogacy experiences; with surrogacy analysed through the utilisation of UK and USA perspectives to illustrate the variations in approach to surrogacy arrangements.

I believe this book would be of interest to anyone who has a special interest in the area of reproductive donation including healthcare professionals, lecturers, students, researchers, clinicians and bioethicists. Indeed, the strength of this book is the way in which the content is both balanced and interlinked; providing a coherent framework for the reader as the authors provide clear cross-referencing to material covered in chapters written by other contributors. To illustrate, Anya Karnein's analysis of family formation amongst same-

sex couples using ARTS, employs an ethical framework of virtue ethics, deontology and consequentialism to examine the key considerations being addressed. Similarly, in chapter 13, John Appleby, Lucy Blake and Tabitha Freeman use deontological and consequentialist ethics in their analysis of the child's right to know about their mode of conception when it has been through the use of donated sperm or eggs. They also draw upon the similarities between secrecy in families and openness in adoption to address some of the issues surrounding donor disclosure. Likewise, in chapter 15, Fiona MacCallum and Heather Widdows address the topic of embryo donation and the ethical issues this treatment choice poses. In their analysis of the issues they too draw upon adoption analogies in their consideration of the similarities and differences associated with traditional adoption and embryo donation. They utilise parent intentionality, the gestational experience and the technological imperative as frames of reference and combine these with a consideration of the commodification debate inherent within the field of third-party assisted reproduction.

The book concludes with a short chapter by Guido Pennings who presents some conclusions regarding the descriptive and normative elements conveyed in the book and the way in which they interact with reproductive donation. His opening sentence conveys the real essence of this volume when he asserts that "if one message jumps out of this book, it is the complexity of reproductive donation" (p. 308). Having read this volume from cover to cover this assertion is no overstatement. Indeed, the way in which issues related to deontology, morals, consequentialism, law, duties, rights and obligations are addressed in this volume enables the reader to appreciate the complexities in the area of reproductive donation.

The book is comprised of 17 chapters, but the book is structured so that readers can choose which chapters are most applicable to them rather than feeling the need to read it in its entirety. Thus, I would highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in practice, policy and bioethics in relation to reproductive donation. It is one that I will be adding my own bookshelf due to its comprehensive nature and because it covers such an array of topics all within a single volume.