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Sascha Wodoslawsky

Joy Fatunbi, MD

Andrea Braverman, MD

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# Sperm donor attitudes and experiences on direct-to-consumer genetic testing

Sascha Wodoslawsky, Joy Fatunbi, MD, Andrea Braverman, PhD\*

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Fairfax  
Cryobank  
*The Trusted Choice for Donor Sperm*



CALIFORNIA  
cryobank  
LIFE SCIENCES

- Background: Direct to consumer (DTC) genetic testing (ie. 23andMe, Ancestry.com) is now hugely popular and provides a way for **genetically linked persons to connect** once they receive their results. This poses an interesting issue for past sperm donors who donated **anonymously**.
- Existing literature: Suggests a general **indifference** from donors regarding contact from offspring through official means (private investigation, sperm bank mediation), cautions of donor **decline** with DTC genetic testing.

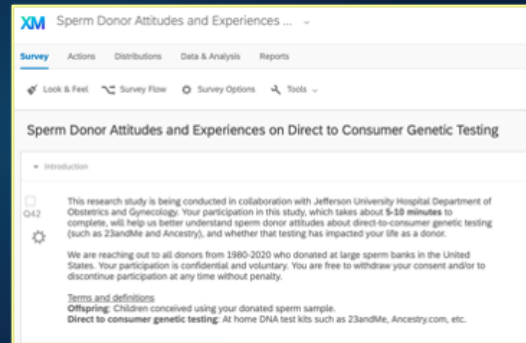
- Knowledge gap: Current sperm donor attitudes and likelihood to donate again now that DTC genetic testing is so widely available.
- Rationale: DTC genetic testing may deter sperm donors from donating again.

## Research Question & Hypothesis

- Research Question
  - Has the prevalence of DTC genetic testing changed attitudes and perspectives of previous sperm donors on the process of sperm donation?
- Hypothesis
  - Previous sperm donors will have an unfavourable view of DTC genetic testing and will prefer not to donate again.



- Study design: Cross-sectional survey
- Population: Sperm donors at Fairfax between 1980-2020 (~3000 donors)
- Outcome: Many qualitative factors
- Data collection: Qualtrics survey
- Analysis: Descriptive



## PICO

**Population:** Sperm donors at Fairfax between 1980-2020 (~8000 donors)

**Intervention:** N/A (cross-sectional survey)

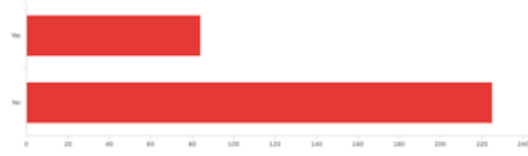
**Comparator:** N/A

**Outcomes:** Many qualitative variables were included in the survey and will generate multiple abstracts. The outcome most relevant to this SI project is whether donor attitudes have changed and if they plan to donate again knowing that anonymity is no longer guaranteed.

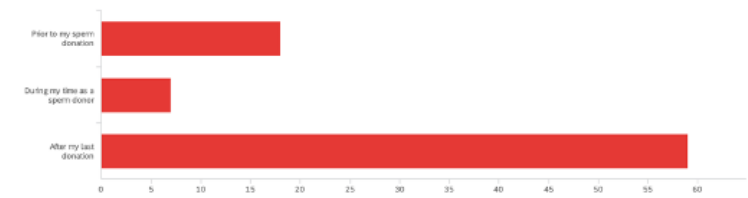
*\*\*Other variables include demographics, donor disclosures to family and friends presently and at the time of donation, their feelings on participating in direct to consumer genetic testing, information on contact from offspring/offspring families, and free text boxes that allow donors to elaborate on their experiences with potential offspring.*

## Approach & Results

Q14 - Have you participated in direct to consumer genetic testing (ie. 23andMe, Ancestry.com, etc.)?



Q16 - When did you participate in direct to consumer genetic testing? (Check all that apply.)

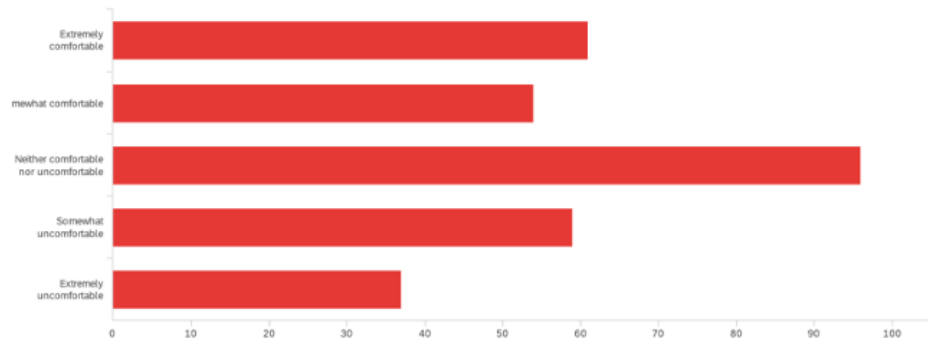


- 364 responses
- 72.8% of donors had not participated in DTCGT
- Of those who did DTCGT, most did it after they donated indicating either lack of knowledge on privacy issues or indifference
- Only 13.4% of those who did not do DTCGT said it was due to not wanting themselves identifiable to potential donor conceived offspring



Q25 - As a sperm donor, how comfortable are you that companies such as 23andMe and

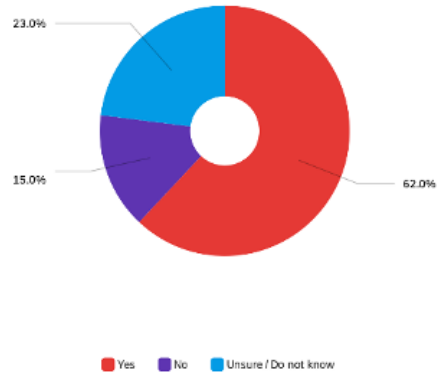
Ancestry.com are sharing the identity of genetically related persons?



## Approach & Results

*"I realize that **anonymity no longer exists** for sperm or egg donors, despite the efforts of sperm and egg banks. As I look back on my decision to try to help couples or individuals have a family, I still think I have **basically done a good thing**. I have probably spent too much time worrying about hiding my identity, after I reasoned that there are now inevitable forces at work to reveal my identity as a former sperm donor."*

Would you feel comfortable donating sperm again knowing that companies such as 23andMe and Ancestry.com are sharing the identity of genetically related persons?



## Conclusions

- Prevalence of DTC genetic testing **has not significantly impacted attitudes** towards donation
- Most donors **would likely donate again**
- **Aligns** with literature suggesting donor indifference to offspring contact, but **refutes** claim of donation decline
- Sperm banks can rest assured that donor numbers will not significantly decrease with DTC genetic testing availability, but **consent and disclosure procedures should be adjusted accordingly**

## Future Directions

- Similar survey project distributed to egg donors
- Prompts adjustments from gamete donation programs to clarify impossibility of anonymity in consent process

