Lesbian couples’ views about and experiences of not being able to choose their sperm donor

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In this qualitative study, we explore how lesbian recipients view and experience the selection of their anonymous sperm donor. The study was conducted in Belgium, where fertility centres follow a legal protocol that severely restricts personal choice in donor selection. While previous studies have shown that recipients want greater control and input in the selection of their sperm donor, this was not a main concern for most women in the present study. They generally acknowledged their lack of control on the selection outcome and accepted this as part and parcel of an anonymous donation policy that provides an opportunity to have a child. They actively and passively downplayed initial concerns about the donor selection procedure and felt they did not have or need a right to further control over the donor selection. In adopting this ‘subordinate’ position, they felt they should trust the hospital, which they hoped would fulfil rather high screening standards. Those who did want more choice were nuanced and careful about their motivations: they focused on selecting traits that would facilitate normal child development or increase family coherence. The findings shed light on how these patients perceive their position in this third-party reproduction setting.
Reference: