Recipients’ views on payment of sperm donors

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The aim of this qualitative study was to explore how recipients viewed payment of sperm donors. The study was conducted in Belgium, where, as in many countries, sperm donors receive recompense for their time and expenses. Face-to-face semistructured interviews were conducted with 34 heterosexual and lesbian couples who, at the time of data collection, had at least one donor-conceived child aged 7–10 years or who were undergoing donor conception treatment. Although participants commonly described the issue of financial compensation as something that did not really concern them, all supported the idea that some level of payment was acceptable or even necessary. The participants also identified several ways in which donor payment offered advantages to their own position as (future) parents. Although the idea is commonly rehearsed that sperm donation is a gift and that monetary transaction for conception is demeaning, the participants of this study did not generally share this view. To them, a small financial return served as a symbolic acknowledgement of the donor’s contribution and helped secure the type of relationship they expected from their donor. There was clearly concern, however, over high payments and the risk of attracting the wrong kind of donor.
Reference: