

THE MORAL PRINCIPLES OF GAMETE DONOR SCREENING

By Laura Socorro

laurasocorro7@gmail.com

laura.Socorro@anu.edu.au

ANU Medical School

The Australian National University, Australia



Australian
National
University

01 INTRODUCTION

- Ethical analysis of gamete donor screening is limited
- **Proposes a framework of 3 levels:**
 1. Legislation
 2. Donor Banks
 3. Individual recipient choices
- Ethical drivers explored: Procreative beneficence, procreative non-maleficence, procreative justice

Research question *“What moral principles drive screening decisions at each level of the gamete donation process in Australia?”*



02

3 LEVELS OF SCREENING

1. Legislation – collecting donor information and minimum standard for genetic and infectious disease screening
2. Donor banks – additional criteria (ethnicity, education, health assessment, age)
3. Individual – autonomy to screen donors based on additional criteria



03 PROCREATIVE BENEFICENCE

- Suggests a moral obligation to select to have the “best child” or at least the child with the best chances of living



03 PROCREATIVE BENEFICENCE

- Suggests a moral obligation to select the “best child” they could have.

What defines “best child” and could this cause discrimination?



04 PROCREATIVE NON-MALEFICENCE

- Suggests a moral obligation to avoid preventable harm to a future child



04 PROCREATIVE NON-MALEFICENCE

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Let's consider these two principles in unjust situations e.g. selecting for sex or skin colour



05 PROCREATIVE JUSTICE

- Suggests reproductive decisions should not perpetuate or increase social inequalities



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Is it discrimination to screen for ethnicity? Or can this be justified in some circumstances?



06 LEGISLATION LEVEL

- Not about maximising positive traits
- Aimed at harm minimisation – driven by procreative non-maleficence



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Why are we screening for genetic/medical conditions?



07 DONOR BANKS LEVEL

- Procreative beneficence and Non-maleficence: age and physical health
- Procreative Justice: education, occupation, ethnicity (it would be an injustice to excluded donors based off these)



08 INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

“What should guide screening choices and what is ethical to select for?”



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“What should guide screening choices and what is ethical to select for?”

- Prospective parent/s can make choices under any of the 3 moral principles
- Parent/s free to choose within the framework



9 LIMITATIONS

- Analysed conceptual rather than empirical content – could not capture actual decision-making practices
- 3 ethical principles provide a framework, but might simplify complex socio-cultural contexts
- Interpretations may vary across jurisdictions and communities



10 CONTRIBUTIONS

- A framework consisting of 3 levels to analyse gamete donor screening in Australia: Legislation, Donor Banks, Individual recipients
- Highlighted key moral principles which guide this framework
- Explored the complexity that comes with screening choices



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Laura Socorro

laurasocorro7@gmail.com

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