

F-2014-00246 - Breaches of the 10 family limit

24 September 2014

Summary of request

The Authority was asked if any of the fifteen donors who "successfully fathered twenty or more children", as was written in a number of recent press articles have breached the 10 family limit, how this might have occurred and the procedures that limit further breaches.

HFEA Response

The data supplied to satisfy the Freedom of Information request used as the basis for these stories gave the number of anonymous sperm donors who were responsible for different numbers of children, conceived through different types of treatment (DI and IVF) as requested by the applicant. Using that same data, which showed that six donors had given rise to 20 children by DI and nine had given rise to 21+ by DI, the HFEA can confirm that none breached the 10 family limit. A breach being defined as a donor being used in treatment (in this case DI) after 01/04/06 (when the 10 family limit came into effect) resulting in live births that created the 11th (or greater) family for that donor.

In recognition that the above criteria do not give a complete picture of treatments using donor sperm the HFEA can confirm that there has been six breaches of the 10 family limit, as created on 01/04/06. The majority of these are detailed in the Authority paper of September 2011 mentioned below. Since publication of this document there has been one further breach. A breach being defined as a donor being used in treatment (all types) after 01/04/06 resulting in live births that created the 11th (or greater) family for that donor.

The questions relating to how breaches of the 10 family limit might occur and how the HFEA limits future breaches do not strictly fall under the auspices of the Freedom of Information legislation. However in order to provide as much information as the HFEA's Enquiries team has prepared the following response:

"Following the Authority's review of donation policies in 2011, which included a review of the family limit, the Authority determined that the family limit should remain at 10 and that clinics should be encouraged to optimise the use of donated sperm.

At this time we also looked at enforcement of the predecessor policy to see what lessons there might be. This caused us to undertake a more thorough review of donor use – the results of which are outlined in [Authority papers of September and December 2011](#). The Authority then issued [guidance](#) regarding clinics monitoring donor usage, to ensure this limit is not breached.