

Importing gametes from foreign banks poses a risk to the ethical standards and fairness of assisted reproductive technology in France¹

**Press release from the French National Academy of Medicine
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In France, assisted reproductive technology (ART), particularly gamete donation, is governed by the Bioethics Act and is based on the principles of free provision, anonymity, informed consent and the non-commercialization of the human body. Ensuring equal access to ART is a key objective for the public authorities, but the number of gamete donors recruited in France currently remains too low.

The importation of gametes from abroad is permitted on an exceptional basis, subject to explicit authorization granted on a case-by-case basis by the French Biomedicine Agency (ABM). This import authorization requires: that children born as a result of the donation be able to access the donor's identity details upon reaching the age of majority; and that gametes from the same donor do not deliberately result in the birth of more than ten children, in order to limit the risks associated with the transmission of a genetic abnormality, such as one predisposing to cancer (1) or neurofibromatosis (2).

Recent changes to the Bioethics Act have led to a marked increase in imports of donor gametes from European banks (Denmark, Portugal) (3).

The procedures followed by some of these European banks do not comply with French legal provisions: the requirement for a donor to have an IQ above 80; the collection of data on physical characteristics, ethnic origin, and sometimes professional, cultural, socio-economic or personality-related information; and, above all, the financial compensation paid to the donor.

¹Press release from the Academy's Rapid Communication Platform.

The price of a straw of sperm may also vary depending on its quality and the criteria selected by the recipients, which leads to inequality linked to the recipient's financial means. It cannot be guaranteed that the limit on the number of children born from a third-party donor's gametes will be effectively enforced.

Considering these findings, the French National Academy of Medicine, reaffirming its commitment to gamete donation based on solidarity, equality, the protection of individuals and respect for the principles of the Bioethics Act, recommends:

- To step up campaigns in France to recruit gamete donors;
- To prohibit the import of donor gametes from foreign banks whose procedures are unlawful under French law, notably because they do not comply with the provisions of the Civil Code or with the criteria for the recruitment, selection and disclosure of donors' characteristics applied in France;
- To continue the import of autologous gametes stored abroad as part of fertility preservation.

References

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2. Ejerskov C., Farholt S., Skovby F, et al., Clinical presentations of 23 half-siblings from a mosaic neurofibromatosis type 1 sperm donor. *Clin Genet*, 2016, 89, 3, 346-350
3. Agence de la biomédecine. Webinaire AMP, 19 février 2026 (file:///C:/Users/7008653-i01/Desktop/Mes%20Documents/Webinaire%20ABM%2019%20fev%202026.jpg))

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