On March 24th, 2004, the Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) Act\(^1\) received Royal Assent and became law in Canada. This law follows what is now becoming an international trend toward prohibiting the purchase of donor gametes and restricting the types of reimbursement provided to donors. Although literature concerning gamete donor recruitment predominately discusses issues surrounding donor anonymity, several authors have reported on the administration of sperm donor programmes without the provision of payment. A review of 22 studies from 8 countries, conducted between 1980 and 2003, concluded that semen donors who are older, married, or are fathers are less likely to be motivated by payment\(^2\). No Canadian data have been published on this topic.

This study was established to investigate anonymous semen donor recruitment at a single Canadian facility subsequent to the restrictions imposed by the AHR Act. Our specific objectives were: 1) to determine if conclusions drawn from previously published studies on the motivations and demographics of sperm donors in various countries are consistent with those in Canada; 2) to determine if the donor recruitment strategies utilized in this study would provide an adequate donor recruitment rate.

Advertisements which communicated the need for gamete donors were targeted to the general population and placed in a variety of local publications. Men who contacted ReproMed Ltd. (RML) in response to these advertisements (n=301) were surveyed in Phase 1 of the study either by telephone or via the internet. The survey contained questions aimed at collecting demographic data as well as information assessing donor eligibility and motivations. Data regarding donor applicant occupation were categorized to allow for comparison with previously published studies\(^3,4\). A full-time donor recruitment coordinator handled all inquiries and recorded survey results. Eligible applicants were further screened in Phase 2 in accordance with RML Standard Operating Procedures and in compliance with Health Canada’s (H.C.) Technical Directive\(^5\) and the Semen Regulations\(^6\), until eventual acceptance or exclusion from the donor programme. No applicants received reimbursement during the screening process.

*Of the original 301 applicants, three donors were accepted into the donor programme, translating into a recruitment rate of ~1%. Only one of these donors was willing to participate without reimbursement.

REGISTRATION


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