

Title: Adolescents' views on communicating about donor-assisted conception

Abstract:

This presentation reports on a small study designed to increase understanding of communication within families about donor-assisted conception. Prompted by Victorian legislation permitting gamete donors to seek identifying details of people conceived from their gametes, views were sought from school-age adolescents in the general population on how parents can best talk to their donor-conceived adolescent children who had not previously been told about their conception. It was found that naïve adolescents had views largely consistent with those of donor-conceived adults, emphasising, for example, the importance of parental honesty, adaptation to individual children, and family cohesion. They identified the social father as the parent while acknowledging the significance of genetic connection to the donor.

Brief Bio:

Maggie Kirkman is a psychologist whose research includes psychosocial aspects of reproduction such as infertility, donor-assisted conception, teenage pregnancy, parent-adolescent communication about sexuality, and abortion. Among Maggie's books are *Telling it your way: A guide for parents of donor-conceived adolescents* (with Doreen Rosenthal & Louise Johnson) and *Sperm Wars: The rights and wrongs of reproduction* (edited with Heather Grace Jones). She is co-editor, with Jane Fisher, of a special issue of *Women's Studies International Forum*, "Women and technologies of reproduction," published in 2008.