

## Examining families that include genetic donors

There is an increasing tendency to want to explain everything human, from stress, to being gay, or having a zest for life as something that is 'in our genes'. The explosion of biomedical research into genetics recently has had a major impact on popular ideas about what defines a person; 'genetic thinking' has become so hugely influential that human life now seems almost determined by a person's genetic make-up.

This 'geneticisation of society' also filters through to assumptions about family life. There is a tendency to think that genetic relationships are the relationships that really matter in families, whereas non-genetic relationships are less well-recognised as important, and sometimes not even seen as 'real'.

These questions were addressed in the event 'Do Genes Matter? Families and Donor Conception.'

The event looked specifically at families through donor conception: families formed using donated eggs, sperm or embryos from a third party. Whereas genetic families might not have to think too hard about what genes mean to them, families by donor conception face a series of questions because they operate outside the framework that family relationships are defined by sharing genetic material. These families therefore offer an interesting viewpoint from which to explore the meaning and importance of genes.

**Read the full, original story: [Do genes matter? Families under the microscope](#)**