

## Lawsuit challenges fertility clinics' suppression of 'free market' for egg donations

How much is a human egg worth? The question is at the heart of a federal lawsuit brought by two women who provided eggs to couples struggling with infertility.

The women claim the price guidelines adopted by fertility clinics nationwide have artificially suppressed the amount they can get for their eggs, in violation of federal antitrust laws.

The industry groups behind the price guidance—which discourages payments above \$10,000 per egg-donation cycle—say caps are needed to prevent coercion and exploitation in the egg-donation process

But the plaintiffs say the guidelines amount to an illegal conspiracy to set prices in violation of antitrust laws. The conspiracy, they argue in court papers, has deprived women nationwide a free market in which to sell their eggs, and enabled fertility clinics to “reap anticompetitive profits for themselves.”

“It’s naked, illegal price-fixing,” said Michael McLellan, a lawyer for the women.

The technology behind donated human eggs dates to the late 1980s. The fee hovered around \$2,000 until the late 1990s, when demand went up and clinics began paying more, said Rene Almeling, a sociology professor at Yale University.

The market for sperm donation, which has also ballooned in popularity in recent years, works differently than that for egg donation. Sperm donors generally contract with a sperm bank to give weekly samples for a year, for which they are paid about \$100 each. There are no price caps on sperm donations, which are sold for between \$400 and \$700 per vial.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Putting a Price on a Human Egg](#)**