

Can someone be held responsible when donor sperm leads to a genetic disorder?

After Danielle Rizzo's first son and then her second were diagnosed with autism, she has struggled with the how and why.

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[Rizzo came to suspect a genetic link](#) involving the sperm donor for both children, after finding several other children conceived with the same donor's sperm who have also been diagnosed with autism or related developmental challenges. A geneticist with expertise in autism identified possible autism-risk genes carried by the children. Her [story](#), in a report published by [The Washington Post](#) on Sept. 14, prompted an outpouring of comments and questions — legal, scientific and ethical — about her case.

A number of readers asked how common it is for serious genetic issues to be linked to donor sperm.

While there is no central database of donors and their children in the United States, some sperm banks try to mitigate risks of donors passing on genetic conditions by testing them for up to 400 common heritable conditions. However, genetic testing is not required.

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There's no simple genetic test for autism. Doctors can screen to see whether someone has genes that might lead to a higher risk, but it is often very difficult to interpret the results.

Read full, original post: [Danielle Rizzo's donor-conceived sons both have autism. Should someone be held responsible?](#)