

O-084 "Socially infertile" single intended parents' motivation for gestational surrogacy: a preliminary report

K. Svitnev¹

¹Rosjurconsulting, Reproductive Law and Ethics Research Center, Moscow, Russia C.I.S.

Introduction: There are two types of infertility: biological and social. The first one is conditioned by the fact that a couple or individual cannot implement their reproductive function due to certain physiological problems. The second one is related to defaults in the legislation regulating assisted reproductive technologies (ART) that cause the same result – inability to become parents for certain groups of population who cannot have children but through assisted reproduction due to the fact that child birth is traditionally linked with marriage. Some people combine both types of infertility.

Modern infertility treatment methods allow becoming parents all who wish it. The most effective method for overcoming both biological and social infertility is surrogacy, often implemented along with different donation programs. For socially infertile individuals, especially males, it might be the only way to become parents.

Methods: Participants were recruited from Moscow-based European Surrogacy Center (ESC) database for 2011. 100 e-mail questionnaires were sent out to single men who applied for gestational surrogacy. 46 participants (21 from Russia, 7 Spain, 5 Germany, 5 France, 4 Italy, 2 Norway, 1 Sweden, 1 USA) volunteered and completed the 10 question form by e-mail.

Results: The average age of the participants was 38,2. All participants were well-off educated white Caucasian males. 100% graduated from a higher school. 79% were employed, 21% were owners of business. The most popular chosen destinations for surrogacy were Russia (70%) and USA (17%).

All participants gathered information about surrogacy via internet. Treatment required by patients was gestational surrogacy (63%) in combination with egg donation. 37% initially required traditional surrogacy using the eggs of the surrogate, choosing later a gestational surrogacy when they knew ESC's recommendation to avoid the genetic link between the surrogate and the child she is bearing. 13% refused to proceed with their programs knowing that recommendation. No patients required sperm donation.

Motivations for implementing a gestational surrogacy program:

The motivation was inability to form a stable heterosexual family for the following 3 reasons:

- i. Fear of divorce with consecutive loss of children to a former wife (48%)
- ii. Sexual orientation (35%)
- iii. 'Haven't met you yet' factor (17%)

Discussion: One of the main principles of modern bioethics is that interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society (Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, 2005).

Refusing to allow people with **limited reproductive possibilities** to become parents if they can have children through modern assisted reproduction techniques including surrogacy, means discrimination. Depriving **reproductively disabled** people of existing reproductive technologies we exclude them from reproductive process, washing out their unique genes from the gene pool of humanity. It also leads intended parents to seeking a cross-border reproductive care, exposing them to potentially dangerous treatment abroad, given lack of legal advice, cultural and language barriers.

Conclusion: Opposite to what is generally thought, the main driving force behind single intended fathers applying for surrogacy to become parents is not their sexual orientation, but a fear to lose their future hypothetical children to their former wife in case of divorce, often in combination with 'haven't met you yet' factor. Preference for Russia is explained by the fact that surrogacy for single males is allowed and there is a possibility to get a birth certificate of a surrogate child with the name of intended father as a sole parent. Comparatively low cost is also an issue.

The right to procreation should not depend on sex, marital status, sexuality: it is a natural unalienable right of any person providing intergenerational continuity and further evolution of *Homo Sapiens*. All reproductively challenged people wishing to become parents through ART should have the right to fulfill their dream in their home country.