

ACART Consultation on Informed Consent. Submission by the Amanda van Rooyen.

Good morning Hayley,

As per our conversation at the AABHL Conference in Wellington, I would be interested in keeping in touch regarding informed consent requirements for assisted reproduction. At the moment my research is focused on children giving informed consent for health decisions in New Zealand. I have just written an article for the New Zealand Medical Journal with Dr Tineke Water, Shayne Rasmussen and Prof. Kate Diesfeld regarding the notion of competence and how this may effect children's participation in health decisions (in press, should be published in the next few months). Hence I am interested in the child's perspective when it comes to informed consent requirements for assisted reproduction.

There were a few talking points I scribbled down during the workshop on Saturday:

- May I suggest that consent is 'a given' in the context of assisted reproduction – clients are there often as a last resort. However *informed* consent may not be a given. I therefore pose the question; do clinics have an obligation to inform their clients to a specific standard and to assess their clients understanding of that information?
- Allowing donors to decide where/how/what happens to their gametes – a possibly discriminatory argument. I understand the argument made in the workshop for allowing this however this argument did not take into account the multicultural context of New Zealand.
- May I suggest a change to the format you obtain informed consent – Rather than a discussion over a period of time resulting in a signature on a piece of paper agreeing to a possibly vague statement, could informed consent be more of a series of questions (possibly in the form of an interview and questionnaire) relating to the multiple facets of assisted reproduction and the clients answers evidencing the 'informed consent'?
- Could the point of no return be dependent on those who bear the responsibility to protect the rights and wellbeing of the child i.e. the clients/future parents of the child? Could the moment in time where the donor loses the obligation/responsibilities to the child be when the 'point of no return' begins? This would then give future parents the rights to decide whether or not the donor could have future access to the child (seeing as they have the power anyways to tell/not tell the child they originated from assisted reproductive techniques).

Just some ideas, I hope they are helpful. Thank you for an interesting workshop and for giving us the opportunity to brainstorm this complex issue with you and your team.

Kind regards,

Amanda

Amanda van Rooyen
Registered Nurse/Clinical Educator
School of Clinical Sciences
AUT University