

Sperm from donor with cancer-causing gene used to conceive around 200 kids

Copenhagen: A sperm donor, who is an asymptomatic carrier of a genetic mutation increasing the risk of cancer, was used to conceive at least 197 children worldwide, Denmark's public broadcaster DR revealed Wednesday. Between 2006 and 2022, the sperm of anonymous Danish man (using the alias Kjeld) was sold to 67 clinics in 14 countries. In Denmark alone, 99 children were fathered by the donor.

According to DR, Denmark's European Sperm Bank (ESB), one of the largest in the world, was alerted in April 2020 that a child conceived via donation and diagnosed with cancer carried a genetic mutation. ESB then tested a sample of the donor's sperm, but the screening did not detect the rare TP53 mutation. Sales of the sperm, which had been suspended during the testing period, then resumed.

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Three years later, ESB was informed of at least one other child conceived from a donation with the mutation that had developed cancer. It then tested several samples, which showed that the donor carried the gene, though he was healthy. The use of his sperm was blocked in 2023. "The specific mutation is a rare and previously non-described TP53 mutation that is only found in a small part of the donor's sperm cells and not in the rest of the body," the ESB said. **AP**