

Browse online for beautiful sperm and eggs

July 27 2010, by Paula Bustamante



Greg Hodge, managing director of BeautifulPeople.com, speaks during an interview in Beverly Hills, California, on July 16. The Internet fertility forum aimed at creating beautiful babies, started in Denmark in 2002, recently went global in 2009 and is now in 190 countries around the world and it represents every ethnicity in the world.

Ever worried about having an ugly baby? Fret not, a popular dating website exclusively for beautiful people has branched out to provide a fertility forum aimed at creating beautiful babies.

Criticized by some as narcissism gone mad, the project was launched in June, shortly after BeautifulPeople.com booted out 5,000 people who gained weight and were deemed too ugly to remain members.

Presented as a solution for parents who worry about having ugly children, the Fertility Forum is "like any charitable work," according to

managing director Greg Hodge, a good-looking Brit.

It's "a noble cause for those going through the difficult experience of failing to conceive," he told AFP, explaining that the site gets no payment for directing donors and recipients to professional clinics.

The forum is accessed through the BeautifulPeople.com website, which was founded in 2002 in Denmark and now has a presence in 190 countries, although only pretty people need apply.

Those wanting to join submit a photo for approval by their peers -- some 600,000 people pay to be part of the network that proudly styles itself as the world's largest community of beautiful people.

"It's completely democratic -- if you secure enough positive votes, you are accepted; if not, you are shown the door," said Hodge, who manages from Los Angeles the website launched in the United States in 2005.

In a major departure for the BeautifulPeople.com founders, even ugly people are allowed to subscribe to the new forum, browsing for attractive [sperm](#) and egg donors to ultimately improve the gene pool.

Beautiful members can post if they want to donate their genetically blessed sperm or [eggs](#) to an unattractive person or couple who wants a baby.

"Initially, we hesitated to widen the offering to non-beautiful people," explained BeautifulPeople.com founder Robert Hintze, an attractive blue-eyed Dane.

Can't be selfish with attractive genes

"But everyone -- including ugly people -- would like to bring good-

looking children in to the world, and we can't be selfish with our attractive [gene pool](#)."

When Hodge unveiled the virtual sperm and egg bank in June, he said there was obviously a massive demand for attractive donors.

"Every parent would like their child to be blessed with many fine attributes, attractiveness being one of the most sought after. For a site with members who resemble Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Angelina Jolie, you can imagine the demand."

At an interview in a Beverly Hills cafe, where most passers-by looked like Hollywood stars, Hodge sidestepped questions about ugly people and portrayed the initiative as a worthy cause to help those with fertility problems.

"We remain impartial, we're a vehicle of information that eventual donors and recipients can get, but without any link to any fertility clinic," he told AFP.

Egg donor Lisa Bluemel, 30, told AFP she initially joined BeautifulPeople.com to meet people and broaden her network, thinking that if a romance came then so much the better.

The Fertility Forum caught her attention because she had a friend who could not conceive. "I know the anguish she has gone through," she said.

Bluemel said her decision to donate eggs was nothing to do with the money and wasn't superficial or narcissistic in the slightest.

"It's a deeply emotional decision and I have given it much thought, giving a couple the gift of a new life and helping in the creation of a loving family is perhaps the most special gift of all.

"It's not about just seeking beautiful babies," she added. "Naturally intelligence, health is the most important, but why can't you try to secure all the best attributes? Who would not do that for their child?"

A Spanish woman, who had struggled for years to have children but is now eight months pregnant, pointed out that the principle behind Fertility Forum was nothing new.

"This has been done in clinics for some time, not with pictures but with a profile about donor characteristics: tall, blond, blue eyes, from a Nordic country," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Richard Paulson, a fertility expert at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California who has practiced reproductive medicine for 25 years, warned there were no guarantees of a beautiful baby.

"Making a decision about one's future partner, whether it is a marriage partner, or partner for reproduction, on the basis of information posted on a website would be naive at best," he said.

"I do not consider these types of websites to be dangerous, or threatening, but rather, simply amusing."

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