

UK opens National Sperm Bank amid donor shortage

30 October 2014

Britain opened a National Sperm Bank on Thursday to help meet rising demand for donors.

Officials said it is designed to help [single women](#), men with [fertility problems](#) and same-sex couples to build families.

The bank was set up to counter a national shortage of sperm donors at a time when the number of patients seeking [sperm donation](#) is increasing. It is based at the Birmingham Women's Hospital 115 miles (185 kilometers) northwest of London.

The National Sperm Bank will be run by the National Gamete Donation Trust in conjunction with the hospital. It said the sperm bank will reduce the number of patients "putting themselves at risk" by using unregulated donation services.

The center is also intended to help men who have had [cancer treatment](#) or suffer a [genetic defect](#) and cannot produce sperm.

It will recruit and screen donors and bank the sperm.

One goal is to increase donors from inside Britain to lessen reliance on sperm from other countries. Both Denmark and the United States supply large quantities of sperm to Britain to offset the shortage.

Dr. Allan Pacey, chairman of the British Fertility Society, told BBC that economics has sometimes made it easier to import sperm from other countries than to increase the donor supply.

He said "it kind of just doesn't feel right" to import so much from other countries. Pacey said another goal is to increase the ethnic diversity of sperm donors.

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