

Posthumous Assisted Reproduction

ABSTRACT

Cryopreservation of gametes and embryos allows for children to be conceived after the death of their genetic parents through the process of posthumous assisted reproduction (PAR). Although the techniques are routine, the moral and ethical details are controversial and remain unsettled. Furthermore, there are numerous medicolegal implications that complicate matters. The principal parties to be considered are the decedent, the child who will be born of PAR, the significant other requesting the procedure, other living children, and even society at large. Numerous case studies exist and expert opinions have been published recognizing PAR as a vexing ethical issue. Most experts agree that explicit written consent forms signed at the time of cryopreservation are the best method to minimize some of the controversy involved with PAR.

KEYWORDS: Posthumous assisted reproduction, posthumous conception, gamete cryopreservation, embryo cryopreservation.