

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine Practice Guidelines advise "an arbitrary limit of no more than 25 pregnancies per donor per population of 800,000, in order to minimize the risks of consanguinity." For those of us who speak plain English, consanguinity is sexual contact with a relative closer than 2nd cousin.

It's interesting to note that "25 pregnancies per donor per population of 800,000" is a formula for getting the number of pregnancies recommended per donor. It is not like they are saying they advise no more than 25 pregnancies per donor period; they are saying no more than 25 pregnancies in a population of 800,000. So you need to do the math before you know what their recommendation on the maximum number of pregnancies is. That ratio when reduced, by the way, is 1 pregnancy for every population of 32,000. So in order to know the recommended maximum pregnancies per donor for your city, for instance just divide that city's population by 32,000 and there you are.

I have yet to see any major news publication do the math. I'd love to see that on the front page of the New York Times, because that number applied to the [population of New York City](#) is 255 pregnancies per donor. When you apply the formula to the [world population 6,840,507,003](#), (cryobanks ship world-wide and fertility tourism for eggs is international) you get a staggering ASRM recommended arbitrary limit of no more than 213,766 pregnancies per donor.

It's worth noting that the 2nd page of the same practice guidelines restate that formula in slightly different terms that would net an entirely different and much larger result. Larger than 213,766 pregnancies? Try 213,766 families instead. That's right, the second page uses the word families in place of the word pregnancies so that they recommend limiting donors to no more than 25 families in a population of 800,000 to limit the chances of incest. What they don't give is the limit of pregnancies for each of those 25 families in that population of 800,000 people. If the limit were 2 pregnancies for every 25 families in a population of 800,000, you'd go  $2 \times 25 = 50$  pregnancies per population of 800,000 which reduced is 1 pregnancy in a population of 16,000.

I thought the ASRM's use of the word arbitrary limitation on the number of pregnancies per donor was interesting because arbitrary means totally random and apropos of nothing. The only requirement is that the number be so astronomically high as to not restrict the members of their organization from maximizing their profit from gamete sales. Industry professionals can pretty much create as many offspring per donor as they want up to that 213,766 limit and still say that they are following ASRM guidelines. If they were to exceed that 213,766 limit they could still say they were following ASRM guidelines by pointing to the paragraph that limits gamete donation to 25 families in a population of 800,000.

Interestingly enough, the [1993 ASRM guidelines recommended no more than 10 offspring per donor period](#). That is correct, it was not always a formula to be applied by the reader. That number 10 should sound familiar because it is [the limit of offspring per donor in the United Kingdom](#) as well. That is a helluva paradigm shift huh? How'd THAT happen? When'd THAT happen? Well I don't know how, but I do know when,

thanks to the [Oxford Journal of Medicine](#).

The 25 per population of 800,000 formula that we were talking about above, comes from a report published in 1995 called Determination of a maximum number of artificial inseminations by donor children per sperm donor. Fertil. Steril., 63, 419–421 by deBoer, A., Oosterwijk, J.C. and Ritgers-Aris, C.A. (1995).

So from 1993 to 1997 the ASRM limited the number of offspring to 10 per donor and then in [1998 published recommendations](#) following the deBoer formula of 25/800,000 and that formula is still what the ASRM recommends according to the publications available on their website.