

What does it mean to be a donor offspring?
The identity experiences of adults conceived
by donor insemination and the implications for
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What does it mean to be a donor offspring? The identity experiences of adults conceived by donor insemination and the implications for counselling and therapy FREE

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Abstract

In the absence of research with adult donor offspring, this study begins to bridge that gap by asking individuals about their experiences as donor offspring and considering the implications for psychotherapeutic and counselling practice. Sixteen participants (13 male, three female, age range 26–55 years) recruited through donor insemination support networks in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia, were sent semi-structured questionnaires by E-mail and post. Using identity process theory as a framework for understanding participants' accounts, the data were qualitatively analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Participants consistently reported mistrust within the family, negative distinctiveness, lack of genetic continuity, frustration in being thwarted in the search for their biological fathers and a need to talk to a significant other (i.e. someone who would understand). These experiences could be postulated as being indicative of a struggle to assimilate, accommodate and evaluate information about their new identities as donor offspring. Psychotherapists and counsellors need to be aware of these identity issues if they are to meet the needs of donor offspring within therapeutic practice.

Keywords: [donor offspring](#), [donor insemination](#), [identity](#), [genetic continuity](#), [psychotherapeutic and counselling practice](#)

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