Are there any egg donors out there with a similar experience with severe OHSS and/or other serious medical issues following egg donation? Any parents or egg donors out there who suspect that eggs or embryos were stolen and sold without your knowledge?

One mom’s story, after making contact with her egg donor:

"The two issues are egg donor hyperstimulation with severe consequences and my strong suspicion that the agency / clinic have stolen eggs/embryos from me.

Egg donor complications:

I knew at the time that our egg donor had suffered ​Ovarian Hyper​-​Stimulation​ Syndrome ​​ (OHSS)​, excess fluid and had been hospital-i​s​ed with pneumonia. Our conversation revealed a much worse situation. She ended up with organ failure, in a coma for 10 days, a total of 6 weeks in hospital and weeks in rehab after that. As a result of complications she will no longer be able to have biological children or to carry a child. I do not know the exact nature of the complications and did not ask. Our donor said that she had come to terms with the situation. She then mentioned that, as part of the insurance (legal?) claim, the clinic will pay for a surrogate to carry the “8 eggs left over from your donation which were frozen”. So she does still have the chance to have a biological child. I am very glad for her that she does still have the opportunity to have a child of her own.

However….

My suspicion and feeling that the agency / clinic have stolen eggs / embryos from me:

I have been left with doubts and suspicions from our conversation. Without any hesitation, had I been made aware of the situation and asked, I would have immediately agreed to sign over any remaining eggs or embryos to our donor. I was not asked. The egg donation was made directly and solely to me. It was not a shared donation, it was not a donation of a set number of eggs. The legal contract states that at the time of donation all of the collected eggs and subsequent embryos become my “legal property”. There are two possibilities, that the clinic still has either frozen eggs or frozen embryos resulting from the donation to me. I was not informed of this situation, nor gave permission for eggs to be frozen, nor have I been asked to sign over the disposal or transfer to another person of either eggs or embryos.

Frozen eggs? On the day of egg collection I was told there were 33 follicles, 29 eggs collected and 19 eggs fertilised. I did wonder about the relatively low fertilisation rate in comparison with the percentage fertilisation of my own eggs from my previous cycles. However, I rationalised it as a consequence of the hyperstimulation leading to larger numbers of eggs which were often of poorer quality or immature, hence you might anticipate a lower fertilisation rate. With the egg donor being told by the clinic that there were “left over” frozen eggs available for her future use, it is possible that the clinic decided to retain and freeze 10 eggs from the collection.

However, in 2006, egg freezing on a commercial basis was in its early stages and neither routine nor that successful. Added to the fact that the eggs would have to have been frozen the day of collection, and the full extent of our egg donor’s complications and her subsequent hospitalisation did not happen until a few days aft​​erwards, the only motive for the clinic to freeze eggs that day would have been to keep some and sell them to another client. So it is possible that eggs were frozen but seems less likely due to the state of technology at the time.

Frozen embryos? After a fresh embryo transfer, which didn’t work, I was told 11 embryos were frozen. Two months later I returned to the clinic for a frozen transfer of 3 embryos. I was surprised to be told by the doctor that they had had to thaw out all 11 embryos to have 3 viable embryos to transfer. Once again this did not compare well with previous cycles with my own eggs where I had seldom lost an embryo from thawing. And these embryos were created from much younger donors so should have been a much higher quality. I just assumed that this clinic had higher standards for the embryos it would transfer. I went on to have my child that cycle. It does seem a bit of a coincidence that our egg donor mentioned the number “8 leftovers” and that is the exact same number of embryos which supposedly didn’t survive thawing. It now seems likely that the clinic retained those remaining frozen embryos. At that stage they would have known the result of the egg donor’s complications and be dealing with the insurance/legal consequences.

My thoughts and feelings are very conflicted. I am glad that our egg donor still has a chance to have her own biological child. However, I had wanted a second child and feel that opportunity has been stolen from me. If it is eggs that are frozen, then any resulting children will be half-siblings of my child. That is what I had expected would eventually happen so nothing changes there. But if it is embryos that are frozen any child will be a full sibling of my child. That just seems a very different situation to get my head around. I feel that I have been forced into becoming a donor myself, before I considered my own family complete. It also means potentially more half-siblings for the other sperm donor siblings.

Of course the other possibility is that the clinic is lying to our egg donor and there are no eggs/embryos remaining from her donation."