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Ethics at the beginning of life

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A Prospective long term follow up interview study of Genetic and Gestational surrogate mothers and Intended mothers: Expectations and Experiences

Participants (N=81) were studied at the start of their surrogate arrangement, during pregnancy, and up to 6 months post delivery. There were highly significant differences between surrogates and intended mothers in socio-economic status, age, partner age, numbers of previous pregnancies and length of time between meeting their surrogate or intended mother and the start of the pregnancy. Eighteen percent of genetic and 20% of gestational surrogates reported having had PND in a previous pregnancy.

At the start of the arrangement, most genetic surrogates (82%), and genetic intended mothers (83%) said a genetic link was not important to them, or they were not sure. In contrast, 72% of gestational surrogates and 75% of gestational intended mothers believed a genetic link was important to them. Up to 90% of both types of surrogates were confident about their arrangement at the start, compared to only 55% of intended mothers, although confidence had increased somewhat postnatally. Confidence about the surrogate baby followed the same pattern. All intended mothers adjusted well to their baby, and most surrogates maintained some contact with the baby post relinquishment. At the start of the arrangement, 68% of genetic, 59% of gestational surrogates and 65% of intended mothers said they would do it all again. At 6 months post delivery, genetic surrogates became less and gestational surrogates more favourable about doing it again. The ethical and clinical implications of the results are discussed in relation to appropriate self-selection, psychological risks and adjustment to life during and following a surrogacy arrangement.