Germs in Sperm

German mom-to-be gets HIV

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A German woman who got HIV after being artificially inseminated with “fresh” sperm may prompt that country to impose stricter quarantine rules for donors. “The donor tested negative—the virus was present but not detected because it was a fresh infection,” said the University of Bonn’s Dr. Bertfried Matz, who published a research letter on the case in The Lancet. Three weeks after receiving the sperm, the 35-year-old mother-to-be became ill, then tested positive with a strain of HIV identical to that of the donor’s, who was then retested and turned up positive. Had the recommended quarantine period on donated sperm been observed, Matz said, the infection could have been avoided. Freezing and storing sperm for three to six months—after which time the donor is retested—has been a must in the United States since the ’80s, following eight cases of sperm-donor HIV infection. Since then, there have been no reported cases in this country. Germany currently only recommends waiting.

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