Australian's use of surrogacy

Abstract

Objectives: To investigate the characteristics of parents and intended parents and their current and planned behaviour in relation to surrogacy arrangements.

Design, setting and participants: Members of two Australian parenting support forums who were considering surrogacy or were currently or previously in a surrogacy arrangement were invited to complete an online survey during July 2013.

Main outcome measures: Sociodemographic characteristics; proportions engaging in domestic uncompensated and overseas compensated arrangements; countries used; costs incurred; and impact on behaviour of state laws criminalising compensated surrogacy.

Results: Of 1135 potential participants, 312 (27%) commenced the survey. Of these, 24 did not fulfil inclusion criteria and 29 did not complete the survey. Eighty-nine respondents were considering surrogacy and 170 had commenced or completed surrogacy. Many respondents (53%) considered both overseas and domestic surrogacy. Among those who only considered one option, overseas surrogacy was considered significantly more often than domestic surrogacy (92% v 8%; P < 0.05). Only 22 respondents (8%) commenced with a surrogate in Australia. The most common countries used for compensated surrogacy were India and the United States, and average total estimated costs were $69,212 for India and $172,347 for the US. Barriers discouraging domestic surrogacy included concern that the surrogate might keep the child (75%), belief that it was too long and complicated a process (68%) and having no one of the right age or life stage to ask (61%). Few intended parents (9%) were deterred by state laws criminalising compensated surrogacy.

Conclusions: Most Australian intended parents via surrogacy consider or use overseas compensated arrangements. Laws banning compensated surrogacy do not appear to deter those seeking surrogacy arrangements.

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