Attitudes toward sex selection: a survey among potential users in Israel

Hashiloni-Dolev Y1, Hirsh-Yechezkel G2, Boyko V2, Wainstock T2, Schiff E3,4, Lerner-Geva L2,4

1The Academic College of Tel-Aviv-Yaffo, Yaffo, Israel
2The Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research, Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hashomer, Israel
3Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hashomer, Israel
4Tel Aviv University, Sackler School of Medicine, Ramat Aviv, Israel

Abstract

Objective
Since 1995, Israel allows social sex selection (SxS) under certain circumstances. However, data regarding the attitudes of potential users are limited.

Methods
The study population composed of a stratified sample of Israeli married men and women at the reproductive age (women aged 17–45, men aged 17–65), who had 1–2, 3, or 4+ children of the same sex.
We conducted telephonic interviews with 687 Israeli residents using a structured questionnaire that included the following items: demographic characteristics, opinions regarding SxS, personal interest in expanding the family, and interest in choosing the sex of a future child.

Results
Among the group of respondents who wanted to have more children (true potential users of the technology), 42.6% wished to select the sex of a future child. Strong desire for family balancing was found. In a multivariable logistic regression model, being an ultra-orthodox was associated with a lower desire to choose (OR = 0.02; 95% CI: 0.01–0.06), while having more same-sex children was associated with a greater desire to choose (OR = 3.12; 95% CI: 1.54–6.32).

Conclusions
It can be estimated that if SxS were to be freely permitted in Israel, less than half of those for whom SxS is truly relevant would want to use the technology.