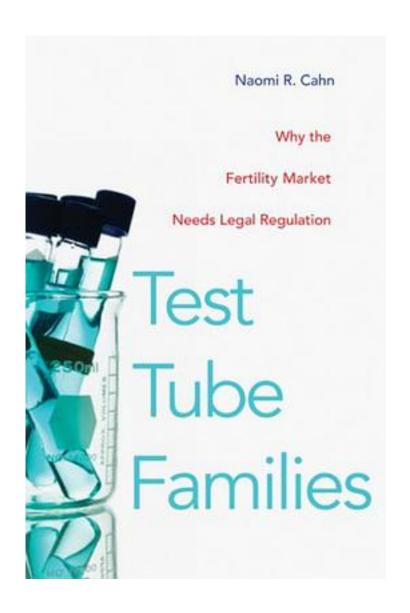
Test Tube Families



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著者:Naomi Cahn

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The birth of the first test tube baby in 1978 focused attention on the sweeping advances in assisted reproductive technology (ART), which is now a multi-billion-dollar business in the United States. Sperm and eggs are bought and sold in a market that has few barriersto its skyrocketing growth. While ART has been an invaluable gift to thousands of people, creating new families, the use of someone else's genetic material raises complex legal and public policy issues that touch on technological anxiety, eugenics, reproductive autonomy, identity, and family structure. How should the use of gametic material be regulated? Should recipients be able to choose the "best" sperm and eggs? Should a child ever be able to discover the identity of her gamete donor? Who can claim parental rights? Naomi R. Cahn explores these issues and many more in Test Tube Families, noting that although such questions are fundamental to the new reproductive technologies, there are few definitive answers provided by the law, ethics, or cultural norms. The regulatory void outside of minimal requirements for gametic testing and limited protection against deceptive marketing techniques used by fertility clinics creates thorny problems for all involved in the egg and sperm business. As a new generation of "donor kids" comes of age, Test Tube Families calls for better regulation of ART. It exhorts legal and policy-making communities to cease applying piecemeal laws and instead create laws that sustain the fertility industry, yet protect the interests of donors, recipients, and the children that result from successful transfers. Incorporating real-life stories to illustrate her arguments, Cahn provides specific suggestions for legal reforms. The book sets out a series of controversial proposals, including an end to donor anonymity and a plea for states to clarify parentage decisions. She also calls for the federal government to regulate ART processes to ensure that donors are adequately protected against exploitation, that recipients receive the gametes they have been promised, and that the market functions ethically as well as efficiently.

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