

‘Savior sibling’ raises life-and-death questions

Genetically selected test-tube baby saved sister’s life

By Josephine Marcotty, McClatchy News Service

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MINNEAPOLIS — Ten years ago a little girl from Colorado made medical history when her parents and her doctor at the University of Minnesota used genetic screening to create a baby that could save her life.

Now, 16 years old and back in Minnesota for her 10-year checkup, Molly Nash is unimpressed that her little brother — her irritating little brother — became a “savior sibling” by giving her his umbilical cord blood — the sole reason she’s alive today to back sass her parents.

Her parents, however, know what was at stake. Jack and Lisa Nash were offered a long-shot chance to save the life of their daughter and to have more children who did not have the fatal disease they both carry in their genes.

When their story first became public, reaction from around the globe ranged from astonishment to horror and helped fuel the backlash against embryonic research. Molly’s doctor at the university, Dr. John Wagner, was accused of playing God.

Molly Nash was born with a severe type of Fanconi anemia, a blood disorder that almost always results in leukemia by the age of 10. Until Molly was born they had never heard of it and had no idea that they each carried a gene for it. The only treatment is a bone marrow transplant. The greatest likelihood of success is when the donor marrow comes from a sibling who has genetically identical tissue.

The critics focused on their decision to use genetic screening to select a child for a trait that would benefit someone else. Also, it raised the question of whether they wanted another child or were simply trying to save Molly.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think it is a proper way?
2. If you were the sibling, would you be willing to keep giving your sister or brother what she/he need? Why or why not?
3. If you were the sibling, would you accept your brother or sister keep giving you what you need? Why or why not?
4. If you were parents, would you bear another kid in order to save your first one? Why or why not?
5. What will influence the savior siblings in physical and mental ways?
6. Should selecting savior siblings be banned?
7. What are savior siblings' advantages and disadvantages?
8. If there is a patient suffers from the leukemia, and you are the doctor, what advice would you give them? Is the savior siblings the only way?
9. Do you think that the sex of the savior sibling will make a different attitude?
Ex: A girl will think she wants to defend the right of using body of herself, but a boy will think it is he definitely has to save his siblings.
10. In your opinions, what are the values of the savior siblings?