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Reproductive freedom: rights, responsibilities and choice



Box 9.3 Case study: Natallie Evans

In 2001 Natallie Evan was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Her treatment involved removing her ovaries, rendering her infertile.

Natallie had always known that she wanted children. Before her treatment therefore she and her then partner, Howard Johnson, went through IVF and produced six embryos which were frozen for later use.

Natallie and Howard then split up. The six frozen embryos were Natallie's only chance of having her own children. But Howard no longer wanted to have children with Natallie and he withdrew his consent.

For 5 years Natallie took her case through every court open to her. But eventually the Grand Jury of the European Court decided that Natallie's right to found a family could not over-ride Howard's right to withhold consent. The embryos were not taken to have any independent right to life.

In April 2007 the six embryos were destroyed.⁷