

Is sex in space being taken seriously by the emerging space tourism sector?

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What would a human conception in space mean for the sector? That's the situation posed by an international group of scientists, clinicians and other interested parties, who have authored a consultative green paper

led by David Cullen, Professor of Astrobiology & Space Biotechnology at Cranfield University.

It highlights that the emerging space tourism sector has not openly considered or discussed the risks of sex in space or prepared suitable mitigation approaches. It argues it is unrealistic to assume all future space tourists will abstain from [sexual activities](#)—opening the possibility of human conception and the early stages of human reproduction occurring in space.

This appears to pose several risks, those of a biological nature such as embryo developmental risks and those of a commercial nature such as liability, litigation, and reputational damage. The authors recommend that an open discussion is now needed within the space tourism industry to consider the risks.

Open discussion on human conception in space tourism is lacking

Professor Cullen from Cranfield University led the work. He said, "Our starting point was a throwaway comment about sex in space, but when we checked, we were surprised the sector has not openly considered the risks and this led to the study."

The green paper strongly recommends that all the relevant parties involved in the space tourism sector enter into open discussions concerning the risks and mitigations, and develop and disseminate best practice approaches within the sector.

The findings of the study have been published today (April 24) in *Zenodo* as a green paper for community consultation.

Human reproduction outside of Earth should be taken seriously

Egbert Edelbroek, the head of SpaceBorn United, a Netherlands-based organization researching human reproduction in space, helped to coordinate the study. He said, "Given the long-term importance of [human reproduction](#) beyond Earth, as humanity is trying to become a multi-planetary species, we need to take seriously the possible first step, whether this is planned, or especially if unplanned."

Alex Layendecker, director of the Astrosexological Research Institute and a co-author of the green paper, said, "The sociological and cultural aspects are fascinating to consider, given the approaching shift from well-trained professional and private astronauts to true '[space](#) tourists'. That shift will encapsulate changes in motivations, social interactions, and behavioral norms, the impacts of which we need to take seriously."

More information: David C. Cullen et al, Sex in Space: Consideration of uncontrolled human conception in emerging space tourism (Green paper for public consultation), *Zenodo* (2023). [DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7852203](#)

Provided by Cranfield University

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