Communication aid

Reciprocal chromosome translocations: pregnancy outcomes

NHS England

This communication aid has been produced for clinicians to help support and guide conversations about reciprocal chromosome translocations with their patients.

Can a reciprocal chromosome translocation be passed on to a child?

When either parent of a pregnancy carries a **balanced** reciprocal translocation, there are several possible outcomes:

1. The pregnancy does not carry a translocation.

2. The pregnancy carries the same balanced translocation as their parent. In general, this has no effect on the pregnancy or health of the child.

3. The pregnancy inherits an **unbalanced** form of the translocation. This means the pregnancy has inherited an extra piece of one **chromosome** or is missing a piece of one chromosome. This may lead to pregnancy loss or having a child with a chromosome condition.

Potential outcomes of a pregnancy may differ depending on the size and location of the chromosome translocation. Some outcomes may therefore be more likely than others.

Key terms

Chromosomes: Packages of DNA which are found in our cells.

Balanced translocation: The term used when two or more chromosomes have been rearranged, but no DNA is lost or gained.

Unbalanced translocation: The term used when a chromosome rearrangement has caused DNA to be lost or gained.

Trisomy: Having an extra copy of a chromosome.

Monosomy: Having just one copy of a chromosome instead of two.

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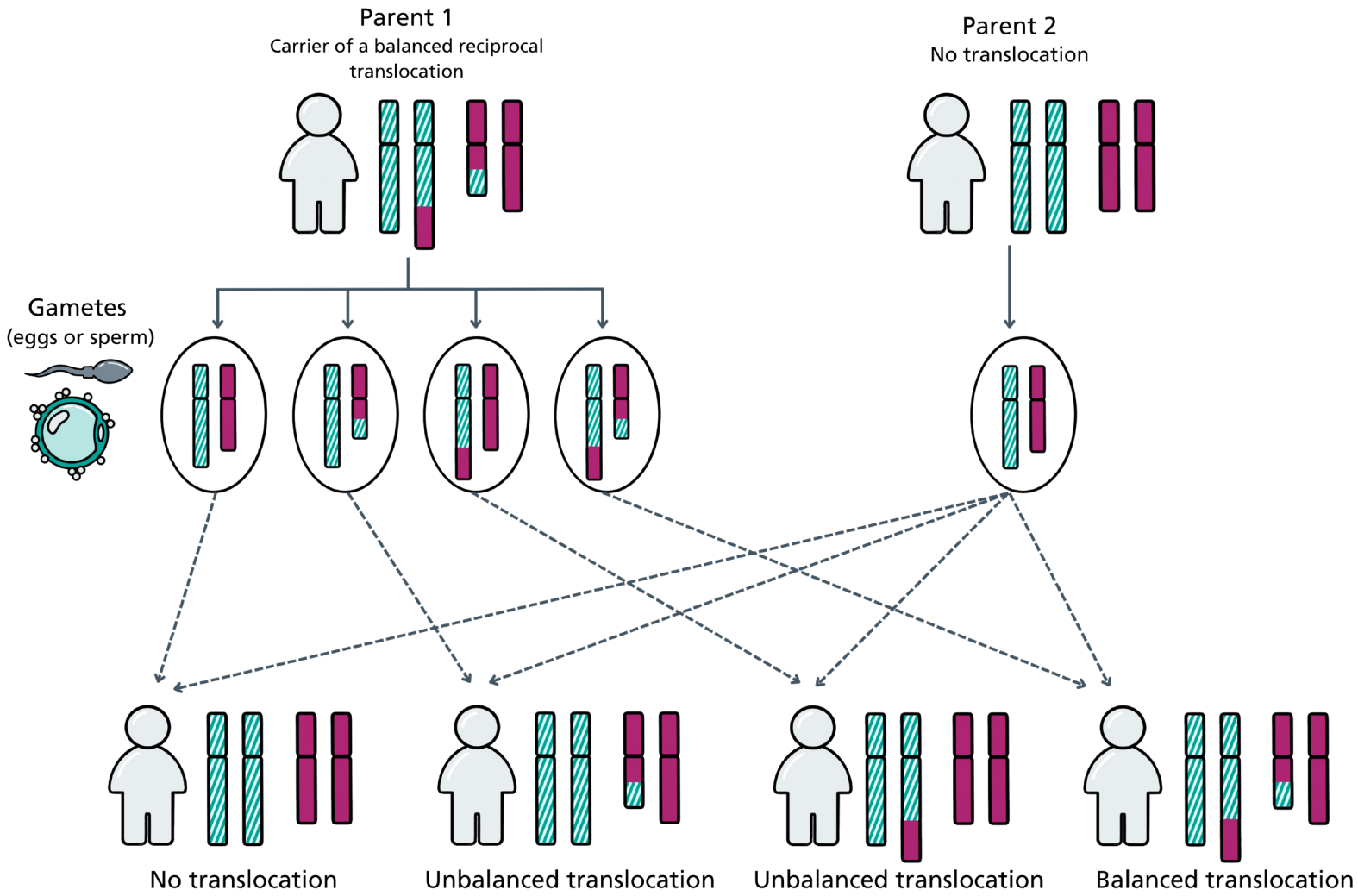

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