

The ethical dilemma of the abortion

Bc. Simona Zajacová, Dis.

Essay

2022



Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1 ABOUT ABORTION.....	4
1.1 INDUCED ABORTION CARE.....	4
2 ABORTION AS THE ETHICAL DILEMMA	6
2.1 DISCUSSION.....	6
2.1.1 Is the Embryo or Fetus a Person?	6
2.1.2 Does the fetus feel pain?	6
2.1.3 Is Abortion Murder?.....	7
2.1.4 Isn't adoption better choice than abortion?.....	7
2.1.5 What about infertile couples?	8
CONCLUSION	9
REFERENCES.....	10

INTRODUCTION

Abortion has been one of the most divisive and sensitive issues.

Some people view abortion as murder, while others argue that abortion is necessary for the survival of women (Bailey, 2012).

Euthanasia continues to be discussed worldwide and it is very challenging topic and the abortion law and policy vary around the world.

While abortion in the Czech Republic is legally allowed up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, with medical indications up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, abortion in Poland is legal only in cases when the pregnancy is a result of a criminal act or when the woman's life or health is in danger (Dziennik Ustaw, 2021).

There is many advantages and disadvantages to be considered if we speak about abortion.

In this essay, I'd like to introduce the abortion as the ethical dilemma and display some of the most asked questions about abortion.

1 ABOUT ABORTION

An abortion is the ending or termination of a pregnancy before the developing fetus is ready to be born nor able to survive.

It can happen naturally when it is known as a spontaneous abortion or a miscarriage. Or it may be done deliberately, when it is known as an induced abortion (Bailey, 2012).

Abortions can be carried out in various ways. It mainly depends on the number of weeks of the pregnancy but there are other factors too. Hospitals and clinic in different countries may prefer to use different methods, or a doctor or a patient may choose one method over another because of health or other issues.

Abortion laws in different countries may limit the number of weeks at which an abortion can be carried out, or may only allow certain types of abortion, or not allow them at all (Bailey, 2012).

1.1 Induced abortion care

It is estimated that of the 210 million pregnancies that occur each year, 2 some 80 million are unintended. In 2008, 21.6 million unsafe abortions were estimated to have occurred, causing the deaths of 47 000 women. 3 Deaths due to unsafe abortion are mainly caused by severe infections or bleeding resulting from the unsafe abortion procedure, or due to organ damage (WHO, 2012).

Therefore, good abortion care is crucial.

Comprehensive abortion care includes the provision of information, abortion management including induced abortion, and care related to pregnancy loss/spontaneous abortion and post-abortion care.

Quality of care encompasses multiple components. It is defined as care that is: effective, efficient, accessible, acceptable/patient centred, equitable and safe. Effective care includes the delivery of evidence-based care that improves the health of individuals and communities and is responsive to their needs. Efficient care optimizes resource use and minimizes waste. Quality abortion care must also be both accessible (timely, affordable, geographically reachable, and provided in a setting where skills and resources are appropriate to medical need) and acceptable (incorporating the preferences and values of

individual service users and the cultures of their communities). It is imperative that access to abortion care is equitable, and that the quality of care does not vary based on the personal characteristics of the person seeking care, such as their gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, if they are living with a disability, or based on their geographic location within a country. And finally, quality abortion care implies that it is safely delivered and minimizes any risks and harms to service users (WHO, 2022).

2 ABORTION AS THE ETHICAL DILEMMA

Is it morally wrong deliberately to end the development of a human fetus and should access to abortion be limited and controlled by laws? Most people have a definite response one way or the other to both these questions, but it is never that simple.

Some of those who believe that abortion is wrong may still accept that it can sometimes be necessary. And some who do not think it is wrong do not necessarily believe that it is always the right thing to do. Both sides might agree that abortion should be controlled by law but disagree about what those laws should say (Bailey, 2012).

2.1 Discussion

There are myths circulating in our society about the effect of abortion on people's emotional and physical health (Government of South Australia, 2022).

Below are some of the most discussed questions of abortion.

2.1.1 Is the Embryo or Fetus a Person?

The pregnancy is a form of life, however there is debate around when a pregnancy becomes a person. There is not just one answer to this question and the answer varies depending on your personal views (Government of South Australia, 2022).

Christopher Kaczor (2010) states, that one way to defend abortion is to defend infanticide, the intentional killing of the baby after birth.

Singer (1995) writes, that if the baby does not have the same claim to live as a person, it appears that the newborn baby does not either and the life of a newborn baby is of less value to it than the life of a pig, or a dog or a chimpanzee is to the nonhuman animal.

2.1.2 Does the fetus feel pain?

There are some myths and misinformation on this question, which can cause confusion. However, reputable studies ii demonstrate that the fetus cannot experience pain in any sense prior to 24 weeks gestation.

This is because developing connections from the body to the cortex in the brain are necessary for pain perception and these are not intact before 24 weeks gestation.

After 24 weeks there is continuing development of these intracortical networks. Additionally, to experience pain consciousness is also required (Government of South Australia, 2022).

Giuseppe Buonocore and Carlo Bellieni (2008) on the other hand claim, that the newborns and the fetuses can feel pain and suffer. This piece of work is the first book dealing with fetal pain and its consequences and with pain in premature babies.

2.1.3 Is Abortion Murder?

Murder is a legal concept that describes the unlawful killing of a living person. The law regarding abortion do not refer to it as murder rather it is considered healthcare. The pregnancy can either be viewed as part of the pregnant persons' body or a separate individual with rights. People who oppose abortion under any circumstance often use the term 'murder' to describe abortion. The use of this term is not legally or medically correct. When people describe abortion as murder it often says more about how they feel about abortion than what it is (Government of South Australia, 2022).

On the contrary Dr. Dough Potter (2020) offers five reasons that all methods of abortion at every stage of pregnancy are morally wrong and should be legally prohibited and socially rejected, that is rejected by our society as an acceptable means of birth control. He also states, that from the integration of philosophy, biology, law, and the Bible, abortion is murder and therefore a sin in violation of God's eternal law.

2.1.4 Isn't adoption better choice than abortion?

This view claims that there are infertile couples wanting children then those who experience an unwanted pregnancy should be encouraged to relinquish their offspring for adoption and some can feel pressured by this. For many the choice to have an abortion is because they do not want to be pregnant, or continue to be pregnant, or to give birth or to relinquish a child. What is clear is that the choice remains with person who is pregnant on the best option. The decision to choose continuing pregnancy, abortion or adoption

requires services to be supportive with a non-judgemental approach, with all reproductive choices considered equal (Government of South Australia, 2022).

2.1.5 What about infertile couples?

Some people feel guilty about being pregnant when they are aware that many infertile couples are not able to achieve their dream of parenting.

Sometimes they feel that they should consider themselves fortunate to be pregnant.

However the circumstances around the pregnancy are crucial.

Having an unplanned pregnancy is not 'lucky', and neither is wanting a child and having fertility issues.

The 'lucky' people are the ones who want to be pregnant and are, or those who don't want to be pregnant and aren't.

Some people put emotional pressure on pregnant people, and they state that those who are contemplating abortion should continue the pregnancy and put the child up for adoption. They suggest that this is the 'right' and ethical thing to do.

Unfortunately, this is a simplistic solution which ignores the potential difficulties for the relinquishing parents. Relinquishing a child for adoption is a significant life choice that has the potential to create ongoing complex and challenging feelings. No one is obliged to bear a child for other people. Experiencing difficulties with fertility whether it's trying to achieve and pregnancy or experiencing an unplanned pregnancy are both difficult experiences alongside many others of the reproductive health spectrum, neither experience is less or more deserving of empathy (Government of South Australia, 2022).

CONCLUSION

I have been working as a gynaecology nurse for six years. I frequently see women who wish to end the pregnancy and choose to undergo an abortion.

I do have an understanding for a women who choose to have an abortion when the fetus that is developing in their body has a congenital developmental defect or if they have experienced sexual abuse.

If a woman is sexually active, gets pregnant and does not want a pregnancy, she should think of using contraception - have protected intercourse. Every young woman should be educated about use of contraception, either by her mother or by her gynaecologist.

I do not judge the women who decide to have an abortion for any reason.

REFERENCES

BAILEY, Jacqui, 2012. *Abortion: Ethical Debates*. Wayland: The Rosen Publishing Group. ISBN 9781448870059.

BUONOCORE, Giuseppe a Carlo BELLIENI, 2008. *Neonatal Pain: Suffering, Pain, and Risk of Brain Damage in the Fetus and Newborn*. Illustrated edition. Italia: Springer Science & Business Media. ISBN 9788847007321.

KACZOR, Christopher, 2010. *The Ethics of Abortion: Women's Rights, Human Life, and the Question of Justice*. London: Routledge. ISBN 9781136896804.

POTTER, Dough, © 2022. *Five Reasons Abortion is Murder: The Killing of an Innocent Human Being*. Southern Evangelical Seminary & Bible College [online]. Charlotte, NC [cit. 2022-10-22]. Available at: <https://ses.edu/five-reasons-abortion-is-murder-the-killing-of-an-innocent-human-being>

SINGER, Peter, 1995. *Rethinking life & death: the collapse of our traditional ethics*. New York: St. Martin's Press. ISBN 0312118805.

INTERNET SOURCES:

Abortion care guideline, 2022. World Health Organization [online]. 8 [cit. 2022-10-22]. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/349316>

Sahealth.sa.gov.au: Government of South Australia [online]. © 2022 SA Health [cit. 2022-10-22]. Available at : <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/>

Unsafe abortion incidence and mortality: Global and regional levels in 2008 and trends during 1990–2008, 2012. World Health Organization [online]. 8 [cit. 2022-10-22]. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-RHR-12.01>

Poland. Wyrok Trybunału Konstytucyjnego z dnia 22 października 2020 r. sygn. akt K 1/20. In: *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej polskiej*. 2021, Available at: dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2021000017501.pdf