

# fetal abnormality essay sample

[Health & Medicine](#), [Pregnancy](#)



The advancement of medical technology has made it possible to detect medical abnormalities while a child is still a fetus and can create difficult choices for parents to make if severe anomalies are discovered. There are many theories regarding the moral status of the fetus that can be applied when deciding how to proceed if these abnormalities are detected. In the fetal abnormality case study, Jessica, Marco, Maria, and Dr. Wilson each have varying opinions on what course of action to take based on these different theories of moral status.

Jessica is torn between her desire to be financially independent and her belief that all life has value. Her belief is what Sebo (n. d.) describes as moral status based on something simply being alive, including all living organisms and ecosystems, etc. She may decide not to terminate her pregnancy because all life is sacred to her and has its own value and rights. Marco is also worried about how having a disabled child will be a financial burden. However, it is not definite that the child will even have Down Syndrome or what its level of functioning will be, or if the child will only be born without arms and no mental disability. Marco is possibly viewing the fetus at its current age as lacking moral status according to three theories, moral status based on moral agency, consciousness, and sentience (Grand Canyon University [GCU] 2015; Sebo, n. d.). Moral agency is the ability to make judgments about whether actions are right or wrong and if intentions can be morally judged (GCU, 2015).

According to studies, fetuses do not develop consciousness (rationality or cognitive properties) or sentience (the ability to feel pleasure or pain) until around week 28 (Kleeman, 2005; Koch, 2009). Based on the information

given in the case study, the fetus is less than 28 weeks. Marco may discuss termination with Jessica based on these three theories. Dr. Wilson also takes the stance on the fetus lacking moral status according to these three theories, but for scientific and quality of life reasons as opposed to financial ones. Maria is absolutely opposed to any mention of termination. She views the moral status of the fetus based on Jessica's responsibility as a mother, or the theory of moral agency based on relationships (GCU, 2015). This theory states that a person must not interfere with another person or must respect their rights because they have a relationship with them (GCU, 2015; Jaworska & Tannenbaum, 2013).

For example, the relationship between a parent and their child, or in this case their fetus, provides a particularly strong case for a parent not to kill their child or abort their fetus (Jaworska & Tannenbaum, 2013). Aside from the relationship of Jessica and her fetus which may prevent her from terminating, this theory is also applicable in this case to Marco and Jessica, as he is going to support any decision that she makes based on their relationship. It can also be applied to the physician-patient relationship, so Dr. Wilson must respect Jessica's and Marco's rights as parents and their choice because of their relationship.

Because moral status has to do with which beings have value or rights, I tend to agree with the theory of sentience. I believe that animals do have rights, especially in terms of biomedical ethics and research. I may, however, seem hypocritical in this belief because I am not a vegetarian. But in this case, based on this theory I would be likely to terminate the pregnancy at

this early stage due to the severe disability and likelihood for mental disability. However, since I have never been pregnant I do not know how that real-life experience would change my viewpoint and decision.

When deciding what action to take regarding a physically and possibly mentally disabled fetus, all individuals involved may have their own opinions and reasons behind them. Because there are several theories of moral status when it comes to evaluating the fetus, the concept of value and rights is a very personal belief. By using these theories of moral status and taking into consideration the recommendations of everyone else involved, Jessica can make the decision that is best for her because ultimately it is hers to make.

## References

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