

Abortion research paper example

[Family](#), [Abortion](#)



Abortion

Life is often considered sacred and a right for all people no matter what ethnic group, religion, ideology, age group or health condition a person belongs. In every life created, it is to be treasured and filled with love.

However, there are some couples or individuals who would forcefully remove this new life from the mother's womb due to the responsibilities this new life would entail. This issue of aborting the fetus has been the subject of many debates throughout history as religion - most especially the Catholic Church - reiterates that it is an act that violates the sanctity of life. In the other side of the argument, there are groups that now question if abortion should be seen as immoral or illegal if the fetus is deemed handicapped. Although there are some instances, wherein aborting a handicapped fetus is accepted, abortion deprives these children the right to live, get treatment and triggers discrimination for those with disabilities.

The problem regarding abortion is seen as a serious issue that needs to be resolved both for the developing and developed countries due to the steady increase in unwanted pregnancies. According to the Guttmacher Institute (2012), at least 43.8 million abortions are done worldwide since 2008 despite the heavy campaign against it. At least a half of these abortion cases are done in an unsafe environment; and at least 47,000 maternal deaths have been reported worldwide because of unsafe abortion. Although these numbers have declined due to abortion laws and heavy anti-abortion campaigns, many women still try to abort their children because of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe sex. The consequences of abortion can be very dangerous especially if it is conducted in an unsafe environment.

Women may become infertile and place them at risk due to the complications abortion may incur. Abortion also increases a family's economic burden due to the treatments that would be needed to treat a woman's complications from abortion and some may even have children with disabilities as a complication caused by abortion .

These statistics have prompted many groups to argue that abortion should be permitted, especially if the fetus is found handicapped. Farrell (2008) highlight that legalizing abortion would ensure that the government and parents can intervene in couples' decisions on having one especially if the pregnancy is life-threatening or accidental. The mother would have to pass a series of tests to ensure that she is capable of withstanding the procedure and have the permission of her family to undertake the operation. Since parents would be asked to sign their consent, they would be able to convince couples to try other methods should they decide on letting go of their child. The parents could take care of the child or bring them to foster care, reducing the financial burden they may have for a couple. Legalization is also seen as a crucial factor in causing teenagers to reconsider unsafe and early sex to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Many of the reported abortion cases involve young teenage mothers who are not ready for the responsibilities set by their pregnancies and once it is made legal, the government can educate teenagers of the circumstances of their acts and save them from other complications such as sexually transmitted diseases and infertility .

According to Painter (2012), abortion is sometimes needed; because it is the only way to save the life of the mother and of the child, preventing their

deaths. Pregnancy is very dangerous for women, especially for those who are vulnerable to heart failure, preeclampsia (high blood pressure) and other severe infections. Obstetrician and Gynecologist Erika Levi of the University of North Carolina even remarked that there are cases wherein abortion is the only way to save the life of the mother at risk in continuing her pregnancy .

In addition to this, Smart (2012) added that aborting fetuses, especially those with disabilities would also reduce the possibilities of other children from contracting these disabilities. With prenatal screening, parents can see if their children have “ spina bifida” or Down syndrome and have them aborted to ensure that no one would have these disabilities in their next children. The financial demands of having children with disabilities is also very costly, especially for the government who would sustain their insurance policies. These children would also be a lifelong obligation for the family, which may pose suffering for these children. Women who decide to have abortion under this reason should be honored because this may be a way for them to save the child from further suffering. In some instances, the children themselves may stress that they should have just been aborted for their suffering and the burden they cause to their family .

Although there are instances where abortion is needed as a last resort, aborting a child just because of their disability should not be supported because it deprives the child a chance to live and be treated. Aborting these children on the premise that their future would be bad and should be killed is not a legal or legitimate reason for condemning them death. Gillon (2001) cited that aborting these children due to their disability is not morally and legally correct as it encourages disrespect and contempt for disabled people.

Human fetuses are also people, and if they are disabled, they are disabled people. In this end, killing them through abortion is like killing adults with a disability. This argument showcases that most prefer to mingle with people who are normal and free from disabilities, looking down on people with disabilities as if they do not have morals or rights. In an example provided by Davis (2003), the Court of Appeals in Britain had rejected the ruling of the Family Division of the High Court that Mary, a weaker conjoined twin that is connected to her sister's blood flow, would die in a couple of months if they are not permitted to be surgically separated. Mary, according to the finding, had no interest in living anymore. The Court of Appeals stressed that while her state was indeed pitiable, having the twins placed in the operation may not be in her best interests. The court stressed that Mary may not be able to express her position in the operation, the operation may cause her to die and deny her the right to life.

With medical treatments now constantly being updated to cure disabilities and handicaps, enabling these children to be born safely in the world would allow them to be cured. Disability does not also mean a lifelong commitment or setback for the child as there are children with disabilities that were able to become successful in life despite their handicaps. Sheldon and Wilkinson (2001) cited that while there are indeed children with disabilities that have impairments that have very negative quality of life, they can still live a life worth living. In the case of a blind person, they may find it difficult at first to move around and appreciate the beauty around them, it does not mean they would remain incapacitated as they can read through braille or utilize voice activated controls. They can also move around with the support of their

family, friends and other loved ones . In addition to this, some abortions on the reason of disability are actually quite dangerous even for healthy babies. Some neo-natal tests that showcase disability in fetuses are not 100% accurate as studies in the United Kingdom revealed that every 25, 000 women who take amniocentesis after their neo-natal screenings, at least 245 of the children are healthy .

Aside from these arguments, aborting a child in any reason should not be supported as it is a violation of one’s morals and the sanctity of life. For the Catholic Church, this position is very much true as they advocate that a fetus already has a soul once it develops. According to Schiff (2002), Christianity sees abortion as a double sin as it takes the life of a fetus and forsakes this life to life without salvation. In this end, they see abortion as an immoral crime as compared to killing a born and baptized child. In addition to this, fetuses –under the teachings of Church – stress that fetuses have equal rights since it already has a soul, which completes his humanity. This argument is also the same for disabled fetuses, which is why abortion would make these people insignificant despite their rights to live and their chance for salvation . According to Schmidt (2009), despite the fact the Bible did not have a clear argument when it came to abortion, it had outlined two specific reference to support its anti-abortion claim. In Galatians 5: 20, St. Paul’s letter included a catalogue of sins that Christians must avoid. One of these sins is known as pharmakeia or the use of drugs or potions. In the past, Greco-Romans often use medicinal potions to induce abortions and many often refer these potions as a work of sorcery and witchcraft. Another Biblical reference is Revelations 21: 8 where Apostle John condemned all forms of “

sexual immorality” as it often results to unwanted pregnancies and cause abortions. These two passages have been the cornerstone to the anti-abortion literature from many Catholic leaders and Pagan scholars. Plutarch, for example, linked pharmakeia to abortion and contraception. The Didache also stressed that abortion is forbidden and stressed “ you shall not kill a child by abortion”, especially with the use of potions or drugs.

With their involvement in the abortion process, medical practitioners should take into consideration the implications of allowing abortion to their medical oath. In the medical field, position regarding abortion has varied due to the various scenarios that challenge their oath to save lives. While there are some instances that would permit the use of abortion to save a life, there are groups that stress that abortion would be against their medical creed.

According to Gillon (1994), medical practitioners have four major ethical principles that they must take into account when it comes to their patients: respect for autonomy, beneficence, non maleficence and justice. Under the principle of respecting one’s autonomy or human dignity, medical practitioners must respect the decisions made by their patients regarding what is to be done to their lives without influencing their decisions or keeping details regarding the procedures to be done. In the case of abortion, medical practitioners should not use their capacity to pressure parents in undergoing abortion just for the reason of eliminating disability and present all alternatives even without being asked. As stressed by the article written by Davis (2003), the findings regarding the case of the conjoined twins indicate that the doctors had immediately concluded an operation is a must without taking into consideration the position of either twin. Some mothers

are even reported to have been coerced to abort their child once their neonatal scans reveal they have disabled children. Medical practitioners should present alternatives for those seeking abortion in order to save the lives of both the mother and the child.

In the second principle of beneficence, medical practitioners should ensure that they would try to prevent harm in any way and take positive steps to ensure that their actions would not violate their patients. They should not advocate abortion in any way or any petty reason such as disability unless it is crucial to saving the life of the mother and child. In response to this, the principle of non-maleficence highlights that medical practitioners should not cause harm to the patient and increase the risk to the patient. With abortion forcing the removal of the child from the womb, the medical practitioner conducting the operation puts the mother at risk and even the future children that would get complications due to the operation. Abortion also presents harm mentally or emotionally, which may traumatize the medical practitioner and patient, adding more harm. Finally, it is crucial for medical practitioners to treat each person equally and in the case of new life; they should also be treated equally, and if they are disabled, they should be treated with respect and protected. Disabled fetuses also have the right to live and be treated by medicine to cope up with harsh society. Killing them outright even before they are born violates this oath on justice. With these principles in mind, medical practitioners should not be the ones to promote the use of abortion and also indicate that they are also against abortion for whatever reason unless it would save the life of the mother or child in the process.

Abortion is admittedly a very sensitive topic to discuss and support because of its moral, social, legal and health implications. On one side of the argument, supporting abortion in its entirety has some merits as it is a method to save lives from very dangerous pregnancies and complications not just for the mother and child. For children who have been deemed handicapped before their birth, abortion would have been a merciful escape to a life of pain, depression and poverty which they may experience once they are born. It may even reduce the number of disabled children that are seen as a liability for many societies. However, as modern medicine continues to find cure or remedy for many incurable diseases and handicaps, children with disability can now be given a chance at a normal life. Abortion would have caused further complications to the life of the mother and child, adding liability and guilt. Each created life, whether they have a disability or not, should be nurtured and treasured because not all families are given the same privilege of having a child and even they have the right to flourish and contribute to society.

Annotated Bibliography

Bauman, M. (2012, January 22). Archbishop Chaput urges respect for life amid high disabled abortion rate. Retrieved from Catholic News Agency: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-chaput-urges-respect-for-life-amid-high-disabled-abortion-rate/>

This article highlighted the position of the Catholic Church, specifically of Archbishop Chaput when it comes to aborting disabled children. In the article, the author highlighted that the Archbishop indicated that these children have the capacity to flourish in society as long as they are

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supported by their love ones and the society. The article even stressed that these children can help others to understand the concept of humanity and love without asking for anything in return.

Davis, A. (2003). *A Disabled Person's Perspective on Eugenic Abortion*. London: Society for the Protection of Unborn Children.

This report done by Davis highlights the various arguments by experts and disabled people when it comes to the issue of eugenic abortion or abortion of children with disabilities. On one part of the article, it indicated that eugenic abortion is beneficial as it would reduce the number of disabled children in society. However, the other part of the article stresses the tests used to indicate if a child is disabled is not accurate.

Farrell, C. (2008). *The Abortion Debate*. Edina: ABDO Publishing Company.

This book highlights the history and nature of the abortion debate, from the various groups supporting and opposing such act. For this paper, the book indicates that abortion is beneficial in its own way, reducing the possibility of unsafe abortions. It would also be beneficial when it comes to helping teenage couples or those wanting to have an abortion to identify other solutions to their problem with supporting their children.

Gillon, R. (1994). Medical ethics: four principles plus attention to scope. *British Medical Journal*, 309, 185-188.

This article illustrates the four major medical ethics principles that medical practitioners should take into consideration. The author also identified a fifth principle on scope, which reflects what medical practitioners should concentrate when it comes to handling their patients and the situations brought before them. This article was used to support the application on how

medical practitioners should view the issue on abortion.

Gillon, R. (2001). Is there a 'new ethics of abortion'? *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 27, 5-9. doi: 10. 1136/jme. 27. suppl_2. ii5

This article highlights the current argument when it comes to abortion and aborting fetuses based on their disability. On the first part of the article, the author writes the major argument when it comes to the perception of people when it comes to fetuses, whether or not they should be seen as people with rights or morals. The second part of the paper stresses the argument as to why disabled fetuses should not be aborted based on their disability.

Guttmacher Institute. (2012). *Facts on Induced Abortion Worldwide*. New York: Guttmacher Institute.

This article provides insight when it comes to the statistics of induced abortion worldwide. The article indicated the statistics of abortion regionally and the changes in these statistics from the 1990s to the 2000s. It also highlighted that abortion is mostly done in the developing countries due to unwanted pregnancies.

Painter, K. (2012, October 22). Doctors say abortions do sometimes save women's lives. Retrieved from USA Today: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/10/19/abortion-mother-life-walsh/1644839/>

This article indicates that abortion is beneficial to the extent that it saves lives. The author presented the argument by indicating several experiences of mothers who had been forced to abort their children due to the health risks posed by their continued pregnancy. The article also indicated the position of pro-life groups, indicating that doctors should try their best to save the lives of both mothers and children.

Schiff, D. (2002). *Abortion in Judaism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This book, in its entirety, the argument on abortion in a religious level. While the book highlighted Judaism's position on Judaism, the book had also used several religions as a comparison to the religion's belief. In the case of the Catholic Church or Christianity, the book stressed that abortion is a double sin.

Schmidt, A. (2009). *How Christianity Changed the World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

This book highlighted several instances wherein Christianity had influenced how the world sees many crucial events and principles today. In the case of abortion, the book indicated as to how early Catholic scholars and literature saw abortion, tracing back its roots to the New Testament and in the Ancient Greek period. The book also indicated that the Catholic faith condemned abortion.

Sheldon, S., & Wilkinson, S. (2001). Termination of Pregnancy for reason of foetal disability: Are there grounds for a special exception in law? *Medical Law Review*, 9(2), 85-109.

This article stressed the various arguments and criticisms of groups when it comes to terminating pregnancies due to disabled fetuses. In one part of the article, it highlighted the major groups which reasoned why abortion is legal on the basis of disability. However, the article also included arguments of critics and examples as to why these reasons should not be supported.

Smart, J. (2012). *Disability across the developmental life span: for the rehabilitation counselor*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

This book presents a step to step guide for rehabilitation counselors in helping families with disabled members to cope up in every step. In the article regarding abortion, the book highlighted the major arguments for pro and anti-abortion, as well as to why others see abortion of disabled fetuses should be permitted. For this paper, this book indicated why disabled fetuses should be aborted because they would reduce the possibility of these children suffering from their handicaps or disabilities.

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