

# Allied Health Medical Law & Ethics



7/26/2016

## Module E.2 Part A: Ethical Issues Relating to Life



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## When Does Life Begin?



- **At moment of conception**
  - Genetic code received
- **Embryo stage**
  - 14 days after egg and sperm unite
- **Fetus**
  - Third month
- **At birth**

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## Assisted or Artificial Conception



- **Artificial insemination (AI)**
  - Artificial insemination-husband (AIH)
  - Artificial insemination-donor (AID)
- **In-Vitro Fertilization**
- **Surrogate Motherhood**
- **Fertility Drugs**

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## Contraception

- Action taken to prevent pregnancy
  - Birth control drugs
  - Condoms
  - Tubal ligation (female)
  - Vasectomy (male)
  - Abstinence
  - Non-coital sex

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## Sterilization

- **Voluntary**
  - Most popular method of birth control in the United States
- **Therapeutic**
  - May be necessary if mother's life or mental health is threatened
- **Eugenic (Involuntary)**
  - Considered unethical by many

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## Ethical Issues: Sterilization and Birth Control

- Risk of procedures
- **Eugenic sterilization:** based on science that studies methods for controlling certain offspring characteristics.
- Acceptable for those receiving state and federal funds to dispense contraceptive devices?
- Should violent sex offenders be ordered to undergo sterilization?

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## Ethical Issues-Sterilization and Birth Control (Continued)

- Should women who receive Medicaid, and continue to have children by unknown fathers, be required to be sterilized?
- Should mentally incompetent women be sterilized?
- Are children treated as property?

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## Abortion

- Termination of pregnancy before fetus is viable
  - Spontaneous
  - Induced
- **Roe vs. Wade**
  - Texas abortion law declared a violation of woman's right to privacy

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## Supreme Court Guidelines on Abortion

- **First trimester**
  - Decision between woman and her physician
- **Second trimester**
  - State may regulate medical conditions under which an abortion is performed
- **Third trimester**
  - State may prohibit all abortions except to save the life of the mother or protect maternal health

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## Related Abortion Issues

- Partial-Birth Abortion
  - Late-term abortion
- Incompetent Persons
- Plan "B" Contraceptive Pill
- Opposition
- Employee's Rights
- Funding
- Ethical Issues

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## Genetic Counseling and Testing

- Genetic counselors meet with couple before pregnancy occurs to discuss potential for passing on defective gene
- Prenatal Testing
- Conceiving Donor Siblings
- Genetic testing of newborns
- Ethical questions

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## Suggested Reference

Fremgen, B.F., Medical Law and Ethics, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (2016). Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN 978-0-13-399898-6

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