

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, 5th edition (2016). Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN 978-0-13-399898-6

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