

Abortion Issues

Back street abortions, 2012

Nearly half of abortions performed around the world are unsafe – 20 million a year according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). 70,000 women die each year, and millions are left with injury, disease and long-term damage. In countries where abortion is legal, most are safe – it is in countries where abortion is illegal that there are serious risks. The WHO calls safe, legal abortion a "fundamental right of women, irrespective of where they live" and claims that access to safe abortion improves women's health.

'Women on Waves', a Dutch charity, has set sail in an 'abortion ship', carrying out nonsurgical abortions in international waters. The ship has stopped at several Catholic countries where abortions are greatly restricted or illegal.



9 year old Nicaraguan rape victim, 2003

A nine-year old Nicaraguan girl was raped in Costa Rica whilst working on a coffee plantation. Doctors there would not perform an



abortion, so she came home to Nicaragua and received one there.

Those involved in the abortion were excommunicated (kicked out of the Roman Catholic Church), prompting 25,000 other Roman Catholics to ask to be excommunicated themselves (they want to be kicked out of the church).

Catholic bishops in Nicaragua issued an open letter comparing abortions to terrorists' bus bombs.

Jo Jepson, late abortion for cleft palate, 2005

Rev Joanna Jepson was born with a cleft palate – usually easily corrected with an operation. She campaigned to bring criminal charges against two doctors who performed a late abortion at 28 weeks in 2001. The doctors argued that a cleft palate could lead to 'severe disability' and abortion was therefore legal after 24 weeks. The CPS announced in March 2005 that it would not bring charges against the doctors. In 2007, it emerged that over 100 abortions in South West England were carried out over a 3 year period for 'minor disabilities' like club foot and cleft palate.



Does the father have a say in abortion? Stephen Hone, 2001

Stephen Hone, 24, went to the High Courts to prevent his ex-girlfriend Claire Hansell, 31, from ending her pregnancy. Mr Hone said he would take care of the baby when it was born, but if Ms. Hansell had an abortion he would seek access to the unborn baby's remains to arrange a funeral.



The judge ruled that the abortion could not go ahead until until the clinic complied with the 1967 Abortion Act by consulting two doctors rather than just one.

Ms. Hansell had an abortion in March 2001.

BMA - Aborted babies born alive

The British Medical Association has said that babies which survive abortions must be given the same care as others born prematurely. Although rare, there are cases where babies are born after drugs injected to stop their hearts fail. The BMA's written guidance states that from birth, all people have the right to expect care and treatment appropriate to their needs. The clinical team would make a decision in the best interests of the baby taking account of all relevant factors. Similar legislation exists in America to ensure that babies born despite an attempted abortion are looked after.



'Morning after' pill

The picture shows a Christmas tv advert for emergency contraception.



Supporters believe it prevents unwanted pregnancy. Critics claim it is no different to an early abortion, and that it encourages casual sex. One in five women aged 18-35 have taken the pill in the last year (*Co-op survey 2010*). A study showed that handing the morning after pill out free to young people has led to a rise in sexually transmitted disease (*The Impact of Emergency Birth Control on Teen Pregnancy and STIs, 2011*). It also showed no reduction in teen pregnancy rates.