

[Leah Torres, MD](#)

Ignorance begets disease.

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Abortions Save Lives

by Leah Torres on November 2, 2012 in [Medicine](#) with Comments Off [Tweet](#)

Some people have surgery because they wish the faces they were born with looked different. Some people have surgery because they feel their bodies need improving. I am not referring to burn victims or those born with physical abnormalities that would benefit from surgery for improved quality of life, I am referring to the “Joan Rivers” of the world, for example, whose surgeries are elective and not medically indicated.

There is no such thing as an elective abortion. Period. Every woman has an indication to have an abortion and every indication is valid. The choice to undergo the risks of carrying a pregnancy, giving birth to an infant, and then rearing the infant are all different stepping stones with different consequences in the same spectrum of reproductive health. A woman may choose not to undertake any risk of pregnancy and have an abortion, or she may choose to undertake the risks of pregnancy and childbirth but not the risks and sequelae of rearing the child. These are decisions that no woman makes lightly.

I know what you are about to say, but consider this: contraceptive methods fail. Even the most effective methods, such as sterilization, have a failure rate of less than 1 in 1,000, which is as good as it gets after abstinence but that means pregnancy can still happen. Men and women can do everything they are supposed to in order to avoid pregnancy, but nothing is perfect or without risk in this world.

Abortions have saved the lives of many women I have had the privilege of caring for. If a woman has to choose between having an abortion and the financial burden of having another child, risking becoming unemployed, homeless or not being able to provide for herself or the family she has, then the abortion is life-saving. If a woman has to choose between having an abortion and delaying treatment for her diagnosis of cancer, potentially costing her life, then the abortion is life-saving. If a woman has to choose between having an abortion and refusing an abortion that is the treatment for an infection in a pregnant uterus which could spread to her body causing sepsis, then the abortion is life-saving. If a woman has to choose between having an abortion and continuing a pregnancy with her heart condition that would worsen and cause her to have heart failure and possibly die, then the abortion is life-saving.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/pregnant-dominican-teen-center-abortion-debate-dies-delayed/story?id=17044066#.UKLw6qXprA4A> (modified 11-13-12)

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2012/1114/1224326575203.html> (modified 11-13-12)

The list goes on. These are not fairy tales. These cases are real, and I have been involved in others that are similar. What is a valid reason for having an abortion? If a woman does not want to undergo the risks of pregnancy, childbirth, and/or rearing a child that is reason enough. It is valid. It is an indication.

As long as humans have been having sex, humans have been performing abortions. It is one of the treatments for a diagnosis of undesired fertility and an essential part of reproductive health care. Keep it legal. Keep it safe.

Â http://www.acog.org/Advocacy/ACOG_Legislative_Priorities

“ACOG will promote access to contraception, including emergency contraception, for females of reproductive age, and advocate the use of medically accurate information.Â ACOG opposes unnecessary regulations that limit or delay access to care.”



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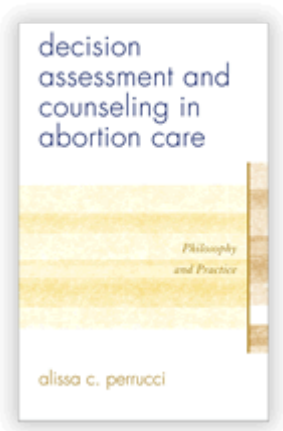
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Recommended Reading



Knowledge is Power

- [Bedsider](#)
- [Guttmacher Institute](#)
- [Planned Parenthood](#)
- [Scarleteen](#)

Stand with Women

- [American Civil Liberties Union](#)
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