

M.D. TO BE

Should med students be required to watch an abortion?

By **Marianne DiNapoli** on June 29, 2011 at 6:56 AM

My first day of Obstetrics/Gynecology was as amazing as I hoped it would be. If the other 30 days of the rotation are just as thrilling, I think I've found myself a specialty! As much as I think I'm going to like it, I have heard OB/GYN is one of the harder blocks because of the long hours and many requirements.

During orientation, we received a giant packet of assignments for the next five weeks, one of which is a checklist of about fifty different procedures, operations, or diagnoses we are required to see in OB/GYN. This list includes everything from observing a hysterectomy to examining a woman in premature labor to counseling new mothers on breastfeeding. However, one requirement that is conspicuously absent from the list is observing an abortion.

The OB/GYN in charge of us medical students informed us that we could opt-out of seeing an abortion if we were opposed to the procedure. I was shocked by this. One out of every three women will have an abortion in her lifetime, making it one of the most common procedures in this country. I would think every doctor should at least know how one is performed, regardless of the specialty they ultimately choose or their beliefs about when life begins.

Not to mention, the same procedure is done under circumstances other than the voluntary termination of a pregnancy, such as during a miscarriage. There are so many other requirements for OB/GYN, I can't believe this one isn't on that exhaustive list.

Readers, what do you think? Should docs-to-be have to see an abortion at least once during their training? Or should it be up to the student to decide?