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HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: Edited by Rebekah E. Gee

# Stratified reproduction, family planning care and the double edge of history

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## Abstract

### Purpose of review

There is a growing clinical consensus that Medicaid sterilization consent protections should be revisited because they impede desired care for many women. Here, we consider the broad social and ideological contexts for past sterilization abuses, beyond informed consent.

### Recent findings

Throughout the US history, the fertility and childbearing of poor women and women of color were not valued equally to those of affluent white women. This is evident in a range of practices and policies, including black women's treatment during slavery, removal of Native children to off-reservation boarding schools and coercive sterilizations of poor white women and women of color. Thus, reproductive experiences throughout the US history were stratified. This ideology of stratified reproduction persists today in social welfare programs, drug policy and programs promoting long-acting reversible contraception.

### Summary

At their core, sterilization abuses reflected an ideology of stratified reproduction, in which some women's fertility was devalued compared to other women's fertility. Revisiting Medicaid sterilization regulations must

therefore put issues of race, ethnicity, class, power and resources – not just informed consent – at the center of analyses.

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