

Should gynecologists be obliged to perform abortion

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The impact of a liberal abortion law in Sweden

Restricted abortion Law	Liberal abortion law
No right to abortion	Abortion guarantee
15.000 illegal abortions	No illegal abortion
Abortion related mortality	
1 in 1000	1 in 700.000
% abortion before the 12th week	
37.9	93.6

Conscientious refusal

- Conscience has been defined as the private, constant, ethically attuned part of the human character. It operates as an internal sanction that comes into play through critical reflection about a certain action or inaction. According to this definition, not to act in accordance with one's conscience is to betray oneself, to risk personal wholeness or identity

Conscientious refusal

- Personal conscience, so conceived, is not merely a source of a personal conflict. Rather, it has a critical and useful place in the practice of medicine. In many cases, it can foster thoughtful, effective and human care. Respect for conscience in this meaning is important but the effect when exercised by doctors can be to frustrate or negate women's legal right of access to abortion. To force gynecologists to perform abortion may not be in the best interest of the woman

FIGO recommendations

- No doctor should be expected to advise or perform an abortion against his or her personal conviction
- Neither society nor doctors have the right to impose their religious or cultural conviction regarding abortion on those whose attitudes are different

FIGO recommendations

- The doctor has the duty to refer patients in a timely manner to other providers if he or she do not feel that they can provide the requested abortion service
- Conscientious refusal is a personal matter. A woman has the right to have access to abortion and the health care institutions have an obligation to provide such services as safely as possible

Conclusion

- My answer to the question is yes. Gynecologists are allowed to refuse to perform abortion based on conscientious reasons. However, he or she should give medically correct information regarding abortion and without delay refer the woman to a colleague who are willing to take care of the woman. Medical care should be organized so that the woman can obtain an abortion at any time and an adequate number of providers are available so that the woman is able to exercise her right to abortion

