

# International Journal of Health Science

## THE DOCTOR AND ABORTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

---

*Bruno Oliveira Martins*

*Marcelo Henrique de Almeida*



All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-No-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

**Keywords:** Abortion; doctor; ethic.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Abortion is a complex issue that raises intense ethical and moral debates, especially with regard to the responsibility and role of the doctor in this context. To understand the relationship between the doctor and abortion, it is crucial to define what it means to be a doctor, the concept of life, the definition of abortion itself and how the doctor should act in this situation. According to the dictionary, history and literature, a doctor is a qualified health professional trained to take care of the health of patients, acting as an agent of relief for suffering. Throughout history, the medical profession has evolved significantly, going from a time when doctors also worked as barbers, to a technical, ethical, moral practice rooted in in-depth knowledge of anatomy, physiology and medical specialties. This evolution aligns with technological and scientific advances in medicine. It is possible to see the human body as a musical instrument, and the doctor as the one who adjusts it and rekindles the will to live. However, to understand who treats life, it is essential to also understand the concept of life. Life has diverse ethical, religious, scientific and personal definitions and implications, but when addressing health issues, it is essential to consider scientific criteria (such as embryological, genetic, neurological, ecological and metabolic), legal (such as the Federal Constitution) and ethical criteria. (such as the Code of Medical Ethics). Abortion can be defined as the premature interruption, natural or induced, of the gestation process, resulting in the expulsion of the fetus before it can survive outside the uterus. Given this, the doctor should not be limited in his options for action. The law protects it in specific cases in which abortion is permitted – fetal anencephaly, risk to the mother's life or rape – even if, in general, it

is considered a crime. However, the doctor is also legally and ethically protected not to perform an abortion unless the pregnant woman's life is at risk and failure to perform it could cause harm to the patient's health.

## **THEORETICAL COURSE**

To understand the relationship between doctors and abortion, it is essential to define key concepts.

### **DOCTOR AND MEDICINE**

A doctor, according to its linguistic definition, is a health professional trained to treat illnesses and promote health. In turn, medicine is a set of scientific and technical knowledge aimed at preventing, treating and curing diseases and traumas. The figure of the doctor is also shaped by history, with emphasis on Hippocrates, known as the “Father of Medicine”. He established fundamental principles, such as the prohibition of harming the sick and the belief in the healing power of nature. The Hippocratic Oath is still uttered at many medical graduations, highlighting the importance of doctors in relation to patients and society.

### **LIFE**

The definition of life is multifaceted, involving philosophical, biological and religious perspectives. For practical matters in medical and legal contexts, life is guided by objective criteria. The Constitution recognizes life as a basic right and essential prerequisite for the existence and practice of other laws, biology as the presence of characteristics such as cellular reproduction, genetic load, metabolism and cellular unit. Regarding the beginning of life, five perspectives are considered: the genetic, embryological, neurological, ecological and metabolic vision. Each of them presents a distinctive milestone for the beginning of life, ranging from

fertilization to viability outside the mother's womb.

## ABORTION

Abortion is defined as the premature termination, natural or induced, of the gestation process. It can occur spontaneously or induced, commonly through medications or surgical procedures. Abortion is often motivated by reasons of eugenics, therapy, selection, personal choice, or moral reasons. In general, abortion is considered a crime, with exceptions in cases of fetal anencephaly, risk to the mother's life or rape.

## DOCTOR AND ABORTION

The doctor has the authority and legal protection to perform an abortion in legally permitted cases, but also has the ethical and legal support to refuse to do so, unless the pregnant woman's life is at risk and the Failure to do so could harm the patient's health.

## CONCLUSION

Abortion is a highly controversial and complex issue, with intense moral and ethical debates. In the practical context, however, attention turns to issues of life and death, health and the doctor's performance in accordance with ethical and legal principles. In Brazil, abortion is not legalized, except in specific cases, such as anencephaly, life-threatening or rape. However, even within these exceptions, the doctor has the prerogative to refuse to perform the procedure if it conflicts with his moral conscience, as long as the refusal does not harm the patient's health. The doctor's guide must be the law, together with the Code of Medical Ethics, but it is important to recognize that any doctor's decision, whether for or against abortion, will be subject to criticism. Therefore, it is essential that everyone, especially healthcare professionals, deeply understand the principles involved in abortion, from the fundamentals of the medical field to the moral, ethical and social considerations that surround the issue of life for many.

## REFERENCES

- BARCHIFONTAINE, Christian. **Bioética no início da vida**. Revista Pistis Prax, Teologia e Pastoral, Curitiba, v. 2, n. 1, p. 41-55, jan-jun, 2010.
- BRASIL. **Constituição (1988)**. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, Brasília, DF: Senado Federal, 1988.
- Conselho Federal de Medicina (CFM). **Código de Ética Médica (CEM)**. Resolução CFM nº 2.217/2018. [Local de publicação não fornecido]: CFM, 2019.
- LOUREIRO, David; VIEIRA, Elisabeth Meloni. **Aborto: conhecimento e opinião de médicos dos serviços de emergência de Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brasil, sobre aspectos éticos e legais**. Cadernos de Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, v. 20, n. 3, p. 679-688, mai-jun, 2004.
- Moore, Keith L., Persaud, T. V. N., & Torchia, Mark G. **Embriologia Clínica**. 10ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2016.
- PRESTES, Maria. **Teoria Celular: de Hooke a Schwann**. 1997. Editora Scipione. São Paulo.
- RAMOS, Roberto. **O vírus e o conceito de vida em tempos de pandemia**. Revista Princípio, v. 40, n. 162, p. 299-328, 2021.
- SANCHES, Mario; SANCHES, Leide. **Anterior ao conceito de pessoa: dignidade do embrião como ser humano**. Revista Pistis Prax, Teologia e Pastoral, Curitiba, v. 2, n. 1, p. 97-112, jan-jun, 2010.