

The Midwife Perspective

Mary E. Fitzgibbon RGN RM BSc(Hons) MSc
Lecturer in Nursing and Health Care Science,
Institute of Technology, Tralee

Formerly Lecturer/Practitioner in Midwifery and
Women's Health King's College, University of London

To talk about abortion from the perspective of a midwife

- To describe the current situation.
- To outline my experience as a midwife in the UK.
- To draw attention to the difficulties in relation to conscientious objection.
- To highlight approaches to care and the effect of abortion on health.

May 25th

The electorate are being asked if they wish to retain Article 40.3.3

- *Article 40.3.3*
- *'The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.'*
- "The court has made it clear that unborn babies, up to birth, would have no constitutional protection against the legislation that the Government intends to introduce" Prof W Binchy 7/3/18

Or whether they want to remove this article and have the following clause inserted into the Constitution.

'Provision may be made by law for the regulation of the termination of pregnancy'

Termination of pregnancy means a medical procedure which is intended to end the life of the foetus

<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/General-Scheme-for-Publication.pdf>

Once protection for the unborn is removed legislation can be changed at any time by politicians and the people will not be consulted.

This is of grave concern because the unborn will have no rights and removal will likely generate a constitutional right to abortion up to birth.

Experience in the UK

Anencephaly at 19 weeks

Antenatal clinic – crisis pregnancy

London experience

Late term abortion – foeticide up to 39 wks

A/E Marie Stopes 23 wks

Selective Reduction

Approaches to care - PPRM

Asylum for Ukrainian doctors

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/17/ukraine.russia>

Two Patient Model of Care

- This is congruent with Our Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (2014)
- [Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 2014](#)
- However conscientious objection appears to always be part of a caveat.

Our Values and Standards of Conduct

- Values

Nurses and midwives respect each person as a unique individual.

Nurses and midwives respect and defend the dignity of every stage of human life.

- Standards of conduct

- You must respect each person as a unique individual.

- You must respect and maintain the dignity of every stage of human life.

- You have a responsibility to make every valid or reasonable effort to protect the life and health of pregnant women and their unborn babies.

Head 15 Conscientious Objection

- (3) A person who has a conscientious objection referred to in subhead (1) shall, as soon as may be, make such arrangements for the transfer of care of the pregnant woman concerned as may be necessary to enable the women to avail of the termination of pregnancy concerned.
- This raises concerns and other speakers will cover this.

What about abortion and women's health?

- I think we need to ask ourselves is abortion good for women, our professions and for society - what is the evidence around this?
- www.hushfilm.com

I believe that where there is life there is hope

We need to surround women and their babies with love and support.

I would like to leave you with this video

[Eliot 99 balloons](#)