

Medicine and the True Cost of Being in Denial

Back in the early 1800s, most practicing physicians refused to believe that the simple gesture of washing their hands between patients could help prevent the spread of childbed fever among the pregnant women they examined.

Even in the face of compelling scientific evidence,¹ they remained stubbornly opposed to the practice. As a result of this intransigence on the part of the medical establishment over a period of many years, childbed fever (also known as puerperal infection) ended up unnecessarily claiming the lives of thousands of young women.

Today, a similar intransigence exists among many physicians who refuse to “wash their hands” of abortion; they also fail to acknowledge a key and dangerous effect of abortion on women’s health, namely, an increased risk of breast cancer. Abortion of a woman’s first pregnancy has been shown to correlate with an elevated incidence of breast cancer. Yet the medical community, by fostering the practice of abortion, has stubbornly ignored this link, refusing to inform women about this serious health risk, even in the face of compelling scientific evidence. This long-running intransigence means that women

today, not unlike the 1800s, continue to die unnecessarily.

In the 1840s, when Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis began requiring that physicians and medical students wash their hands before examining women or delivering their babies, the mortality rate dropped from 18 percent to 1.3 percent in the maternity ward in the hospital in Vienna. Yet most of Dr. Semmelweis’ co-workers thought handwashing was a waste of time and refused to comply or acknowledge its importance until several more decades had passed. Meanwhile, year after year, he continued to provide statistical evidence that handwashing saved lives, and, year after year, he was criticized in scientific journals and ridiculed by leading physicians throughout Europe. Semmelweis was eventually fired from his job at the hospital because of his insistence on handwashing.

Some who were supposed to be dedicated to saving lives in the medical establishment

of the early 1800s were instead more concerned about political correctness and committed to preserving their own entrenched academic interests. Best medical practice became subordinated to other pressures and misguided beliefs.

Today’s medical establishment faces a similar temptation of placing various irrational ideologies ahead of a patient’s best interests. As modern medicine subtly morphs into a schizophrenic discipline that at times works to save young human patients in the womb, but at other times works to harm that same patient population through abortion, it becomes but a short next step to downplay or ignore the harmful effects that abortion has on women, as in the case of the abortion-breast cancer link.

More than 28 different studies over a period of 45 years have shown abortion to be a significant risk factor for breast cancer. Not only has the epidemiological evidence been abundant to implicate abortion in this way, but it has also been shown that childbearing to full term for a woman’s first pregnancy, especially at an early age, affords a significant



MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS

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protective effect against breast cancer.

A number of scientists and physicians (especially those with connections to the abortion industry) have been quick to suggest that these research results were “inconsistent” and that they could not really arrive at “definitive conclusions.” As a result, young women today rarely receive sound medical information about these risks from their health-care providers. Abortion is aggressively marketed as a “woman’s right” and has become one of the most common and lucrative surgical procedures today. So many within the medical establishment, including various professional associations like the American Medical Association, seem to shy away from serious discussions of abortion’s health risks. A few years ago, George Lundberg, M.D., former editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, noted during an interview with *Health Affairs* magazine how certain topics like abortion and tobacco were “sensitive issues” that had

been on the American Medical Association’s “don’t touch” list for many years.

The danger of breast cancer from induced abortion constitutes a serious health risk that women deserve to be fully and properly informed about, and the ethical failure on the part of the medical establishment and by various cancer watchdog groups in this regard is noteworthy and troubling. Until the practice of modern medicine once again includes a repudiation of direct abortion as part of its professional creed in the way it once did when physicians took the Hippocratic Oath, little progress will be made in addressing a number of serious women’s health issues linked to abortion, including breast cancer.

Modern medicine still desperately needs to break free from its steadfast denial and to wash its hands of the unsavory and immoral practice of abortion if it ever hopes to minister in a fully responsible way to the health needs of pregnant women and their children.

Roe vs. Wade events planned around Springs

COLORADO SPRINGS. Several local events are planned on Jan. 22 to mark the 37th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion nationwide. Scheduled activities include a youth rally, march and an appearance by nationally recognized pro-life speakers. The schedule of events is as follows:

Jan. 16 — Mass celebrated by Father Bill Carmody at 8 a.m. at Planned Parenthood, 1330 W. Colorado Ave. There will also be a Sidewalk Counseling Workshop that day from noon-3 p.m. at the offices of Pikes Peak Citizens for Life, 707R N. Nevada Ave.

Jan. 17 — Ecumenical Youth Rally at 7:30 p.m. at Mountain Springs Community Church, 7345 E. Woodmen Rd., featuring

music, speakers and skits.

Jan. 18 — Mass celebrated by Bishop Michael Sheridan at 10 a.m. at St. Mary Cathedral, with eucharistic adoration and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy beginning at 9 a.m. Following the Mass, a rally featuring pro-life speakers Rebecca Kiesseling, Barbara Allen and Kristi Burton Brown will take place at Acacia Park. After the rally, there will be a silent procession to the Planned Parenthood clinic on West Colorado Ave.

Jan. 21 — Gianna Jessen, a woman who survived an attempted saline abortion, will speak at 7 p.m. at Sunnyside Christian Church, 2025 N. Murray Rd.

Jan. 24 — Interfaith Prayer Gathering at 1 p.m. at Evergreen Cemetery at the Memorial for the Unborn.



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