



Review Article

Ethics of Abortion and Over the Counter Drugs

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ABSTRACT

Medical abortion in today's world has become a common issue among the younger generation. Over the counter drugs are used as a self-medication without any proper prescription. The side effects of these drugs are not taken into consideration. In many countries, these drugs are selected by agencies to ensure that all the drugs contain proper medication since they are usually consumed without any prescription. They are checked thoroughly to see that there are no side effects. Despite all the laws, few women ignore all the regulations and select an unsafe method of abortion. WHO recommendations have restricted the use of abortion pills up to the first trimester. In this article, we can discuss about the Antiprogesterone drugs like Mifepristone and prostaglandins like Misoprostol as a drug for abortion. These drugs are mostly taken as self-medication and these are also approved by the FDA regarding abortion. In India, MTPs can only be performed by the registered medical practitioners up to 49 days. The success rate for abortion has developed up to 95%. Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) has recommended for a close monitoring of drugs that are being used for abortion. Despite this, there has been an increased usage of over-the-counter drugs for medical abortion without any supervision, which may lead to complications in a patient. This study demonstrates various adverse effects of an abortion pill when consumed and the special techniques that are used to remove the fetus from the womb.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the youngsters tend to decide on their own about the termination of unwanted pregnancy. Lack of sex education in mid-schools are the primary reason for various pregnancy terminations. An "Antagonistic relationship" can be caused between the mother and the unborn

children. Many lawyers who have stood up against the unwanted pregnancy have revealed that pregnancy of any woman should be autonomy which means "Self rule". I.e. if a woman is pregnant, she has the full authority to decide if she can keep the foetus or not. Nowadays many young

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women do not choose to accept unwanted pregnancy because of family situations or getting conceived at an underage, which may lead them to choose unsafe methods to terminate pregnancy. These may result in various complications in the women's body. Certain measures must be taken by the young women by consulting a right physician or a gynaecologist. There are certain countries where the abortion is regarded as legal and safe ,but there are still some different parts of world where abortion is regarded as illegal process and medieval thoughts are considered according to superstitious beliefs.

ABORTION

Abortion is considered as an termination of the pregnancy before the viability period. In India abortion is considered legal under the MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY ACT (MTP) 1971. But there are still few women who choose abortion ignoring the legal works which results in unsafe abortion.

MTP can be conducted only under registered medical practitioners or gynaecologists, who have expertise in performing the operations.

Abortion is considered wrong under the values as it involves killing an unborn child/ human being that has the right to live, but this argument can also be considered as an objective tool which states that abortion protects a women from ill conceived child bearing which allows both men and women to create families of their own. Some of the cases to prove this are:

CASE 1:

If "A" has the rights to live:

Then it must fully develop into a human being.

It must have all the characteristic features a human can possess.

CASE 2:

To counter the rights of "A" to live:

The "A" also has rights like other human beings to live.

Killing "A" is equal to spoiling future of it.

REASONS FOR ABORTION

1. Underage which may disrupt education.
2. Lack of support from family.
3. Inability to provide funds for the existing children.
4. Poverty, Unhealthy relationship with the spouse.
5. Inefficient mentality of the lady who is not ready to give birth to a child.

GROUND FOR ABORTION

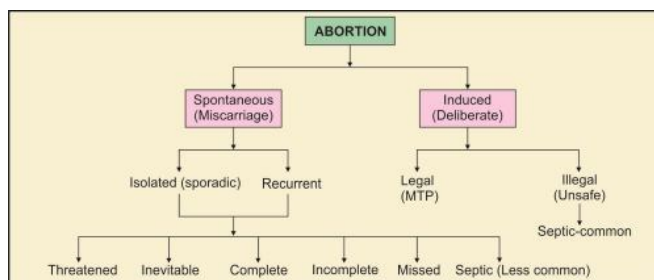
If pregnancy has not exceeded for 24 weeks, or if it involves in providing injury to physical or mental health of the pregnant women.

If the pregnancy involves complications to pregnant women or her health then it can be terminated.

Abortion can be terminated if the pregnancy involves, mental abnormality to the child which is yet to be born.

Abortion may occur due to various reasons like Disease, trauma, gene defect, or biochemical incompatibility of the fetus and mother.

TYPES OF ABORTION:



SPONTANEOUS ABORTION

1. ISOLATED ABORTION

- a. Threatened abortion
- b. Inevitable abortion
- c. Incomplete abortion
- d. Complete abortion
- e. Missed abortion
- f. Septic abortion

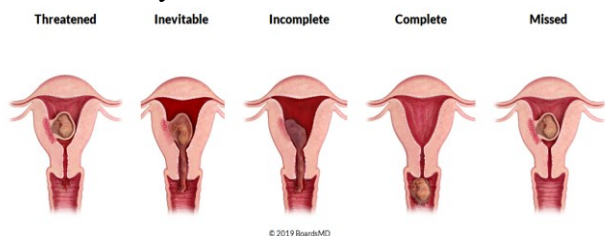
2. RECURRENT ABORTION

INDUCED ABORTION

1. MTP

2. ILLEGAL

- **SPONTANEOUS ABORTION:** It is a loss of pregnancy in a natural way before twenty weeks of pregnancy. There may be many reasons that are associated for abortion which includes age, smoking, obesity, tension, stress, diabetes, etc.



ABORTION TYPES

- **Threatened Abortion:** This term is given when a complicated pregnancy occurs due to vaginal bleeding, before the 20th week (first trimester of pregnancy). A pain in lower abdominal area alongside the vagina occurs during this with bleeding. A closed cervix is seen during the examination of vagina. There is almost an 50% chance for loss of pregnancy.
- **Inevitable Abortion:** In this type of abortion, there is an intrauterine pregnancy with cervical dilation and bleeding in vagina is seen. This usually indicates that continuation of the pregnancy is imposed. There is gush of fluid coming out along with pain, bleeding, fever.
- **Incomplete Abortion:** In this type some of the conceptions or the fluids are lost within first 20 weeks of pregnancy. It usually is accompanied with moderate to heavy vaginal bleeding and lower abdominal pain is experienced.
- **Complete Abortion:** Complete abortion is also called as Miscarriage. There is a spontaneous loss of pregnancy before the 20th week and this might be painful both mentally

and physically. This usually occurs when the fetus isn't developing properly.

This can usually be characterized by heavy vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain and rupture of the tissue lining. All of the conceptions present in the vagina are lost.

- **Missed Abortion:** This is usually also referred as missed miscarriage. In this type there is an in-uterine death of the fetus inside the mothers womb, but the body doesn't recognize about the pregnancy loss. The placenta will continue to produce hormones that are responsible for the baby growth.
- **Septic Abortion:** In this type of abortion, it occurs due to an bacterial infection at upper genital tract which includes an inflammation in the endometrial layer and this can occur before after after the 20th week.
- **Recurrent Abortion:** These are a continuous loss of pregnancies either consecutively or spontaneously of about 2-3 abortions under 20 weeks of gestational period. There is cervical incompetence, and preterm labor.

INDUCED ABORTION: It is the medical way of terminating a pregnancy using surgical methods before the viability. These can either be legal or illegal process.

The legal phase of this abortion is done under MTP Act,1971.

Induced abortions are usually performed if the reason falls into any of the category;

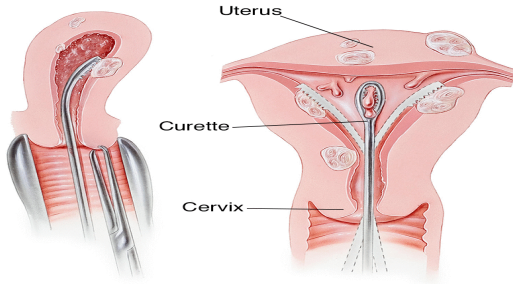
1. To not allow the completion of pregnancy that has been caused due to any of the physical assault like rape.
2. To preserve the mental health of mother.
3. To prevent birth of any child with mental or physical illness.
4. To prevent growth of an inabnormal child.

MEDICAL TECHNIQUES TO PERFORM ABORTIONS

1st Trimester:

1. Suction of fetus

2. Endometrial aspiration can be used: It is a process where a tube is inserted upto the neck (cervix) of womb and sucks the fetus from the uterus by means of an electric shock.
3. Curette can be used to scrape the contents of the uterus. This is called dilation and curettage.



Process Of Curettage

2nd Trimester: 12- 19 Weeks

1. Injection with saline solutions are given to trigger contractions.
2. Administration of prostaglandins.
3. Hysterectomy: Surgical removal of uterine contents.

IN LATE 20s, Mifepristone (RU486) was used (artificial steroid) as an contraceptive hormone. RU486 blocks the action of progesterone which is needed for the development of fertilized egg. After administration of drug it triggers the menstrual cycle and flushes the fertilized egg out of uterus. Abortion pill/ Medication pill are the combination of Mifepristone and Misoprotol.

ABORTION PILL SIDE EFFECTS

1. Fever for few above 100F
2. Heavy or persistant bleeding which continues for 2-3 days.
3. Abdominal pain
4. Foul smelling vaginal discharge
5. Cramps, Anger, Sleep problems.
6. Nausea, Depression.

OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS (OTC)

These are the drugs that can be bought from an pharmacist without prescription. Some of the diseases which can be treated by OTC are headache, pains, fever, sore throat, cough, cold,

etc..There has been increase usage of over the counter medicines in the recent times and this can be considered unsafe as the self medication can lead to various other side effects and adverse reaction with severe pharmacological actions if they are not administered properly, due to dosage difference. Since there is an easy access to OTC drugs self medication has increased in many parts of the world, that are given based on the previous medications, or on advice of outsiders, family, friends, or importantly social media networks. Nowadays social media play an important role in broadcasting advertisements regarding OTC drugs.

Among the OTC drugs, the analgesics are most commonly consumed which are followed by Anti tussives, and for common cold. In the younger generation the commonly consumed drugs are related to abortion. Most of the youngsters use social media advertisements to deal with several problems regarding either pregnancy or any other issues.

SOME OF THE IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS THAT MUST BE FOLLOWED BEFORE CONSUMING OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS ARE:

- a. Every printed instructions on the medicine must be followed properly, and can be consulted with the prescriber if needed.
- b. The list of ingredients present must be checked properly if by chance there is any allergic drug is present in the medication according to the persons health.
- c. Expire date must be checked before consumption of any drugs. They must be replaced accordingly.
- d. Medicines should be stored in cool and dry place and must be kept out of reach of children.
- e. Breastfeeding moms or pregnant women must consult physician before taking any new medicine over OTC.

- f. People taking OTC drugs must take proper care before taking any drugs as different dosage may affect age group of patients i.e. drug dosage reacts differently for the children and old age people as compared to the middle age people.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) allows the retailers to provide Mifepristone with or without an prescription. Mifepristone is a steroid hormone that are used to induce pregnancy that are usually consumed during first trimester of the pregnancy. It work well when it is taken with an dose of Misoprostol which is usually taken 24-28 hours later. This second pill causes the uterus to expel pregnancy. But it is recommended to provide these drugs from an certified clinical stores due to safety concerns.

STATES LIMITING ABORTION PILL USAGE

According to few institutes it is stated that about 29 states ban the self medication of pregnancy pills. That is an initial appointment must be made to get prescription for buying abortion pills. Some of the countries that requires prescription are:

- United states- about 20.8 abortions per 1000 people.
- Canada- about 15 abortions per 1000 people
- Australia- about 19.2 abortions per 1000 people
- Norway- about 15.7 abortions per 1000 people
- France – about 17 abortions per 1000 people
- New Zealand- about 19 abortions per 1000 people
- Japan- about 12 abortions per 1000 people
- United Kingdom- about 17 abortions per 1000 people.

CONCLUSION

The use of steroidal hormones have taken an significant increase during the year 2000 after the approval from the FDA. Medical abortion have been made legal in some of the countries while still

some considers abortion and usage of steroid hormones as illegal without the proper prescription of a physician. On consultation of an physician a proper way is suggested to terminate pregnancy depending on the body condition of the patient. Educating the society regarding medical supervision or counseling is required for abortion, creating awareness regarding the self medication of drugs and their risks. By this article we can conclude there has been an increase usage of over the counter drugs which may increase the adverse effects or may cause complications in women health and it is necessary to consulting a physician.

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