

Fetal Abnormality and the Ethics of Abortion Decisions

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Introduction

Fetal abnormality remains one of the contentious moral issues portrayed as a fight between the fetus's right to life and the mother's right to decide. Some moral theories support the abortion of fetuses with congenital diseases, while others protest against abortions irrespective of the predicted biological, physical, or psychological problems. Fetal abnormality is the abnormal development of a fetus in the mother's womb, which, if not removed, leads to the development of an abnormal child. To understand the role of morality and ethics in the decision to keep or remove the fetus, we consider a real-life scenario. Discussion of different viewpoints that each party holds in the present case depicts how different moral theories support their arguments (Jotkowitz & Zivotofsky, 2010).

Theories Used By Jessica, Marco, Maria, And Dr. Williams

The discovery of abnormal fetus growth raises concerns for the parents, as Marco and Jessica belong to the working class. Jessica and Marco undergo conflicting situations as they need to choose between financial stability or the birth of an abnormal child. The continuation of the pregnancy will contribute to a financial and economic burden for the parents. Dr. Williams suggests abortion of the fetus that is a medically wise choice. Aunt Maria is against the decision of abortion because she thinks taking the life of a fetus is immoral and against the will of God. She protests that Jessica needs to fulfill her responsibilities as a mother and continue with her pregnancy. The utilitarian theory of ethics supports the viewpoint of Dr. Williams as it confers the idea of maximizing utility. Dr. Williams adopts a utilitarian approach to provide a conventional framework and justification for aborting an abnormal fetus. The theory allows him to think about the consequences of the action, which is killing or saving a child.

The deontological theory of ethics supports Aunt Maria's viewpoint as it emphasizes more on moral principles and obligations. The theory does not consider the results of the actions and focuses only on the rule-based ethics and standards that restrict individuals from taking actions that are outside morality. Maria does not consider the outcomes of continuing pregnancy. Jessica and Marco also use the utilitarian theory of ethics to determine the [moral status](#) of the abnormal fetus, as their emphasis remains on the consequences of the actions. In the present scenario, their considerations of the economic and social implications of keeping a fetus reflect its relevance with a utilitarian approach

(Ştefan, 2014).

Influence Of Theories On Actions

The actions and recommendations of each in the present scenario reflect the significant role played by respective moral theories. The actions and recommendations of Maria to keep the fetus exhibit the influence of the deontological theory of ethics. The theory suggests that every action is moral and follows ethical principles. The theory focuses more on the behavior of an individual rather than the consequences. Maria, in the present case, ignores the effects of keeping an abnormal fetus and represents no concerns related to the development of an abnormal and incompetent child.

Deontology states that the deciding authority must not ignore moral philosophy and must be able to choose what is right. Deontology recommends that the mother of the abnormal fetus must fulfill her moral obligation and continue the pregnancy. The decision to have an abortion under deontological philosophy remains unethical and wrong.

The actions and viewpoints of Dr. Williams display strong relevance to the moral theory of consequentialism. William makes his suggestions for intelligence choice under the influence of the consequentialist approach. The philosophy suggests that the morality of an action depends on the consequences. Another premise of the theory reflects that the best actions lead to the maximization of benefits for the maximum number of people. The theory of utilitarianism suggests that there must be a moral reason that supports a particular action. Williams's ideas reflect the foundations of Kant's utilitarian theory because he chooses the option that leads to the benefit of larger people. The thoughts of Jessica and Mario also reflect utilitarian theory as they focus on the consequences. According to Kant's philosophy, causing harm to a few can be justified if it benefits many. Kant's utilitarian theory recommends killing the fetus as it saves the parents from a socio-economic burden (Berry, 2016).

Personal View

I think considering the condition of the fetus and the results of the examination, discontinuing pregnancy will not be unethical. I agree with Kant's theory of utilitarianism because in keeping or killing the fetus, one needs to think about the consequences. As the development of the fetus will give birth to an abnormal child with Down's syndrome, it would involve discomfort and pain for many, including the parents. The child also endures pain as the treatments used to keep him alive are painful (Ştefan, 2014). I believe that the mother must have the freedom to choose if she wants to bring the fetus to life or not. We cannot just rely on the principles and obligations that one has towards each other because, in real life, handling things demands wise decisions. I also support Dr. Williams's suggestion of terminating the pregnancy because Marco and Jessica belong to the working class, and they will face an economic burden, thus reflecting their inefficiency in providing adequate medication and treatments to the abnormal child (Berry, 2016). The utilitarian or consequentialist

theory of ethics supports my recommendation of killing a child. The comparison of the outcomes reflects that a dead fetus will endure less pain compared to a surviving fetus, which later grows into an abnormal child.

References

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