

**Abortion: The Effect and Ethical Implications it has on the
Emotional Intelligence [EQ] of Adolescents.**

By

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Abstract

A study has been done in order to determine the effects abortion has on the emotional development of the adolescent and the ethical implications surrounding abortion. The purpose was to determine what effects abortion have psychologically, emotionally and in some cases physically, the ethical implications surrounding adolescent abortion as well as the future effects of abortion during adolescents due to the emotional implications.

The ethical implications surrounding abortion has been discussed indepth, making mention of the various abortion views. The emotional development stages of an adolescent has been outlined and incorporated and considered with the ethical implications thereof.

The main research findings surrounding adolescent abortions were that it has a severe negative effect on the emotional development of the individual. This has an even worse effect on the future of the individual than an adolescent that went through with the pregnancy. It was found that severe psychological disorders were found in all adolescents whether immediate or later on in the future. And lastly that adolescents were found to be emotionally undeveloped to make a decision such as whether to have an abortion or not.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.



Robynne Louise Howard

Title

Abortion: The Effect and Ethical Implications it has on the Emotional Development [Intelligence (EQ)] of Adolescents.

Background

Love Life, the largest HIV prevention initiative for young people in South Africa states that, nineteen percent of adolescents between the age of twelve and fifteen are engaging in sexual relations, and forty-five percent between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Sixty percent of these youth stated that they were engaging in sexual activity due to the underlying belief that sex was the only way that one's love for another person could be proved and expressed (2000:14).

According to the Love Life initiative, South Africa currently has the highest adolescent pregnancy rate in the world (2003:8). A recent study showed that eight and a half percent of reported abortions that took place in South Africa were performed on adolescents younger than 18; and the main findings amongst these teens were that fifty percent had not received sex-education. It was also found that post abortion counselling services were not found to be on the standard of proposed government regulations. Teenagers further indicated that they would rather opt for backstreet abortions than inform their parents (Engelbrecht 2005:np).

Turrel and Armsworth (1990, chap. 4:49-68) state frankly that an adolescent in most cases of abortion are not emotionally mature to deal effectively with the decision of an abortion as well as post-abortion emotions. Nathanson (1990:224) in his research encountered a respondent that confirmed the above statement by remarking that she was in no manner developed emotionally at the time she underwent the abortion.

Most adolescents that undergo abortions have adverse effects emotionally and psychologically in their development, because they are left with a great sense of loss and the feeling of uncertainty as to whether they have made the correct decision.

Many teenagers who have undergone an abortion no longer pursue further education both at a secondary and or tertiary level (Oliver and Bloem 2004:180).

Further considerations such as the ethical implications of adolescent abortion, current abortion laws, crisis support systems for adolescents, as well as various factors such as education, family and the emotional state of an adolescent to make a decision regarding the deliberate termination of a pregnancy will be researched.

The Research Problem

What are the effects and ethical implications of abortions on the emotional development of adolescents?

The Aim of the Study

The main objective of the research will be to determine what effects abortion has on the emotional development of adolescents and the ethical implications thereof.

Purpose

With the ever increasing abortion rates amongst adolescents since the legalization of abortion in South Africa in 1996 (Phila Legislative update 1996:1), questions need to be asked concerning the ethical implications of adolescent abortions as well as the consequences abortions are having on the emotional development of teenagers.

The purpose for this research is to present a concise, objective account of the conceivably adverse effects abortion has on the emotional development of an adolescent with an in-depth account of the ethical implications. This study will provide researched insights into the emotional aspect of the adolescent during this time of crisis. The circumstances and experiences that surround and occur during the event of an abortion, both pre-abortion and post-abortion, will be examined.

This study aims to answer questions as to whether adolescents are emotionally developed to such an extent that they are able to objectively make a wise decision when in a time of crisis. Are they being counseled and educated with information that is true and which enables them to make good decisions that will benefit them holistically both presently and in the future.

Design and Methodology

Research design:

The proposed research falls within the field of the model proposed by the South African Theological seminary used for theses in practical theology, thus a working model for designing a thesis, shall be used.

Solving the main problem of the thesis will require an introduction, four main chapters and a conclusion. These will be comprised of literature readings, the analysis of selected texts, statistical observations and the examination of previous interviews and research that have been performed pertaining to abortion and the emotional development of an adolescent.

The thesis will require 6 chapters. Here is a proposed outline and intended dates of completion.

Chapter: 1 *Introduction.* The introduction will present the research problem (Abortion: the effect and the ethical implications it has on the emotional development of adolescent) and the research plan.

Chapter: 2 *Abortion: Ethical arguments and implications.* The study will begin with a discussion concerning the ethical arguments and implications of Abortion with reference to current abortion laws in South Africa.

Chapter: 3 *The emotional development of an adolescent.* The next logical step is to examine and discuss the emotional development of an adolescent outside of crisis circumstances and in a healthy environment.

Chapter: 4 *The emotional development of an adolescent in crisis.* Thereafter, a detailed analysis of the emotional development of an adolescent that is in a crisis, specifically within the sphere of abortion will be discussed; and the ability for an adolescent to make objective decisions in a crisis.

Chapter: 5 *Abortion: the short and long term effects.* In light of research presented in the main chapters 3 and 4, the short and long term effects of abortion on the adolescent will be examined and discussed.

Chapter: 6 *Testing the hypothesis and conclusion.* The final chapter will summarize the research and test the initial hypothesis upon which the research rests.

The literature sources that will be used during the course of this research will be electronic literature sources and electronic books. The literature used will vary in each section of research; this is a harmonised collection of the sources that will be used. Furthermore literature that is specifically ethical in nature will mainly be used, however sources that are primarily psychological and medical in nature will also be referenced. Pharmaceutical journals and articles as well as expert field research in the specific requirements will be sourced during the research.

According to Smith (2008:157); the methodology section requires you to take each step from your research design and describe exactly how the researcher plans to answer that step; thus for each step the data and tools used shall be discussed and justified. The articulation of the specific goals the researcher desires to investigate and process (Leedy 1993:9).

Chapter 1: Background and Introduction to the Study

The introduction will state the research problem having a brief statement, demonstrating understanding of the research problem (Smith 2008:13). The objective of the study and the desired outcomes of the research will be clearly stated (Mouton 2001:95). It will include a brief statement of how the research problem will be answered (Smith 2008:13). The basic principles to be achieved in the introduction would be to state the purpose of the thesis, an introduction to the research problem

at hand, as well as a preview of the structure the thesis will be modeled on (Smith 2008:14).

Chapter 2 Abortion: The ethical arguments and implications.

The ethical nature pertaining to abortion needs to be determined in order to accurately answer the overall research question at hand. The following methodologies will be used: A *dialogical* methodology will be used in order to engage with different author's viewpoints (Smith 2008:159), specifically in the field of Christian ethics pertaining to the ethical nature of abortions. The various arguments will be *comparatively* analysed, noting similarities and differences. The different views will be harmonized forming a single, coherent argument that will be referred to throughout the research, thus the paper will be *complimentarily* analyzed (Smith 2008:159). Concluding implications surrounding adolescent abortions, with reference to the current South African laws will be tested upon biblical scripture.

In order to accurately establish the biblical implications within the area specifically that of abortion, one needs to objectively observe and apply scripture. In order to perform this section of the research truthfully, one needs to apply biblical methodologies (Smith 2008:160). *Source criticism* will be applied when analyzing the scriptures applied by the various authors in their arguments; thus analyzing the sources an author used (Smith 2008:160). The scriptures applied will be applied with *redaction criticism* thus exploring the theological message of the text being applied (Smith 2008:160).

Chapter 3: The emotional development of an adolescent.

The focus of this chapter will be to gain clarity on the emotional development of an adolescent outside of crisis circumstances; Understanding the development that takes place in a healthy environment; a stable family, good friendships and the absence of stress. This section is required in order to analyze the emotional abilities

of an adolescent to make objective decision. These results will be compared with an adolescent who has been in a crisis, specifically pertaining to abortion.

The following methodologies will be used; various authorities concerning the emotional development of an adolescent will be used, thus similarities and differences within the various views will be analyzed, a *comparative methodology* will thus be used (Smith 2008:159). The various views will then be harmonized and molded into a single, coherent whole; this methodology known as *complementary* (Smith 2008:159). Certain viewpoints may be favored and thus there will be arguments for and against viewpoints; *polemical* methodology (Smith 2008:159).

The major source which will be used in the answering of this research step will be Erickson's stages of psychosocial development, the stages of emotional development. All viewpoints and extracts from sources will be objectively analyzed, within the context that they were written; in order to formulate an objective conclusion concerning the healthy development of adolescent's emotions.

Chapter 4: The emotional development of an adolescent in crisis.

The research that has previously been done in the field of adolescent abortions and the emotional effects on development will be compared with the similarities and differences found through different researchers; *comparative* methodology (Smith 2008:159). The research will be harmonized and objective conclusions will be established, *complementary* methodology (Smith 2008:159).

Chapter 5: Abortion - the short and long term effects.

This step in the research will be in collaboration with the previous chapter, the emotional development of an adolescent in crisis, drawing from the conclusion the short term and long term effects of abortion will be analyzed.

The short and long term effects will be analyzed, and compared with implications and conclusions that have been made thus far in the research. Similarities and differences in research findings will be documented in order to accurately note what the short and long term effects are of abortion on the person and their future.

Chapter 6: Testing the Hypothesis and Conclusion.

The hypothesis is tentative, and is a presupposition upon which the research direction is formulated. The hypothesis is either proved or disproved through the research conclusions (Leedy 1993:13). There needs to be effective testing of the hypothesis upon which the research is founded. Objective reporting is required in the findings of one's research and the results need to be analytically observed. Therefore the hypothesis is segmented into its logical components and constituents. The research conclusions are formulated through testing the components of the hypothesis upon the research findings (Smith 2008:160).

Hypothesis

The research will rest on these two hypotheses firstly that abortions during adolescent years have adverse effects on the emotional development of the adolescent; that is after the initial abortion [act] was completed or sometime later in their adult years. Secondly, adolescents, due to their current emotional capacity, do not have the ability to make objective decisions in time of crisis, such as the decision to have an abortion, and thus liberal adolescent abortions laws are adversely affecting the adolescents' emotional development.

Chapter: 2

Abortion: The Ethical Arguments and Implications

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is aimed at determining the ethical nature pertaining to abortion, more specifically adolescent abortion, and the ethical implications surrounding abortion. This chapter will be comprised of three main divisions. The first section will deal extensively with the four main ethical views surrounding abortion; the second aspect will deal with the biblical aspect concerning abortion, the creation and personhood in scripture. The final segment will address current laws in South Africa surrounding adolescent abortions as well as the ethical implications.

2.2 Abortion

2.2.1 Abortion: The Dilemma

Historically, there exist different attitudinal responses to the abortion dilemma. The Assyrian, Babylonian, Sumerian and Hittites viewed abortion as a serious crime (Anderson 1998:1). The Hippocratic Oath, "I will not give a woman a pessary to produce an abortion" or "I will not aid a woman to procure an abortion", The Hippocratic Oath (460-377BC). Further to this Josephus the Jewish church historian taught that, the law has commanded to raise children and prohibited women from aborting or destroying seed. The understanding of primitive culture and the early church took a rather conservative view on abortion (Randy Alcorn 1994:162).

Legally, there has been a change in attitude and comprehension in the last few years. Needless to say the medical field is not an easy field to navigate ethical thought due to the complexity of the discipline itself. The 1967 Act of the United Kingdom decreed that, doctors are allowed to perform an abortion if:

- 1) There was a risk to the *life* of the mother
- 2) There was a risk to life of the mother both *physical* and *mental*
- 3) To the existing children (the social clause)
- 4) There existed a physical or mental handicap in the child

In addition the legal limit to terminate a pregnancy was further limited from 28 weeks to 24 but all time limits were removed in case of risk to the mother or foetal handicap (Anderson 1998:3). This was the beginning of the liberation of laws as far as abortion was concerned. A very similar liberation took place in South Africa in 1996, when the new abortion legislation laws were released (Phila legislation Act 1996:2).

Ethically, there are various opinions held. Even within Christian thought there exist several views on abortion. Here the debate centers on the status of the foetus. Is the foetus human or sub-human? When does personhood start? Is the foetus considered a human being at conception or at birth?

2.2.2 Abortion: A Working Definition

The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies (2002) define abortion as “the termination (which may be spontaneous) of a pregnancy after implantation of the blastocyst in the lining of the womb but before the foetus has attained viability.” This definition gives a medical impression that seems unbecoming for this particular mini thesis. The dictionary (ibid), however, offers a second more workable definition, that is “the deliberate termination of a pregnancy, whether for therapeutic or other reason.”

More general definitions are offered by Lessing (2010) without the ethical tone, he defines abortion as the act of giving premature birth, the immature product of an untimely birth, an undeveloped product, to end or cause to end a pregnancy and a deliberate ending of life at an early stage or age.

Kunhiyop (2008:331-332) distinguishes between spontaneous abortion and induced abortion. According to Kunhiyop (ibid) a spontaneous abortion occurs when the

“fertilized egg fails to implant in a woman’s womb and passes out of her body in a monthly period.” He continues, by defining induced abortion as “a deliberate action intended to terminate a pregnancy and kill a developing foetus by removing it from its mother’s womb.”

2.2.3 Adolescent: Towards a Working Definition

According to the South African Republic act an adolescent is defined as one between the age of 10 and 19 years (SA republic 1998: 38). An adolescent can further be defined or characterized as one between the period of development from puberty and adulthood; the period in which transition in physical, psychological and social status from childhood to adulthood takes place (Collins English Dictionary 1991: 20).

Thus adolescent abortions can be defined as the willful termination of one’s pregnancy, by elective choice, during the transition years from childhood to adulthood, more specifically between the ages from 10 years to 19 years.

2.2.4 Abortion: The Four Main Views

2.2.4 1. Abortion: Pro-choice and Following the Legal Line

Within the field of Abortion four ethical views are maintained. The first view maintains the following two presuppositions, firstly that abortion remains the woman’s choice as to what she will do with her own pregnancy¹, and this is true for the believer and unbeliever (Cassidy 2006:120). This school of thought is furthers its argument on legal grounds, stating that abortion is valid and accepted on any basis as the law of any given country allows (Cassidy 2006:121).

Tension exists between the rights of the mother and the unborn fetus’ life. The two opposing sides contest one another (Cassidy 2006:114). Thus the potential life of the

¹ or body

unborn is weighed against the actual life of the mother, vice versa (Geisler 1985: 147).

Secular voices in ethics often take the position that an unborn is merely a 'potential human life', thus the unborn is not fully human (Geisler 1989:136). A prominent secular ethical voice, Joseph Fletcher, positions his pro-choice argument from the position of cost and benefit for the persons involved. He thus proposes abortion should not be questioned but rather unwanted and compulsory pregnancies questioned (Davis 1985:144).

Pro-choice abortion debates are extended on the following foundations:

- 1) An unborn is not human unless it is able to be physically dependent
- 2) An unborn is an intrusion in the reproductive system of a woman
- 3) A woman has full rights when it comes to making a decision as to keep or dispose of the foetus.

Pro-choice proponents do not advocate in favor of the unborn foetus' rights. The argument concludes with the thought that the foetus not being fully human until it is born and the umbilical cord is cut (Geisler 1989:137).

2.2.4.2 Abortion: Absolution

The abortion debate pendulum extends to the opposite extreme stating that any abortion, under any circumstances those including impregnation through rape and incest should not be allowed unless the mother's life is at risk (Cassidy 2006:120). Abortion absolution rests upon the axis that from the point of conception the foetus is fully human. Whether there's a birth defect, risk to the life of the child or the mother, abortion is never justifiable (Geisler 1986:148). This position is also commonly referred to as Pro-Choice.

Secular components from a scientific objective state that from the moment of conception all genetic information is present. All genetic coding that compromise the

human physical characteristics of the person are present from the moment of conception (Geisler 1989:149). Randy Alcorn furthers this position stating that something which is non-human does not become human due to age or size; whatever is human must be human from the genesis (1994:54). Scientific experts have stated it as a biological and medical fact that life of an organism, whether plant, animal or human is from the point of conception; this has also been established in the field of fetology (Geisler 1989:149).

Ramsay states the following:

“Thus it might be said that in all essential respects the individual is whoever he is going to become from the moment of impregnation. He already is this while not knowing this or anything else. Thereafter, his subsequent development cannot be described as becoming something he is not now. It can only be described as a process of achieving, a process of becoming the one he already is. Genetics teaches us that we were from the beginning what we essentially still are in every cell and in every generally human attribute and in every individual attribute.”
(Alcorn 1994: 54)

Davis, ethically debating from a Christian viewpoint expands on the above presuppositions concerning the life of the unborn within the fields of fetology and prenatal psychology establishing that the unborn is a patient on its own, within the 1st and 2nd trimesters of pregnancy (Davis 1985:137). Psychologically the unborn is able to respond to various lights and music pointed toward the mothers belly, these tests have been done during the 1st trimester of the pregnancy (Davis 1985:137).

The above statements have been more recently proved by Scientists who have detected self-awareness in as early as the 2nd trimester. Through ultrasound documentation it was seen that babies move their hands to shield their eyes from bright light coming through the womb. Response to sound and frequencies, so low or high that they couldn't be heard by an adult ear where documented. Rapid eye movement is also documented in foetuses as young as 17weeks indicating not only that the baby sleeps but also dreams (Alcorn 1994:59).

By the end of the third trimester, the period in which abortions are still legalised under prescribed conditions, the baby has neural brain circuits' function in the same

capacity of a newborn. It is upon these scientific evidences that pro-choice activists propose their arguments, abortions are killing of a human life (Alcorn 1994:59).

2.2.4.3 Abortion: Anti-Abortion but Moderated by Compassionate Flexibility

Anti-abortion ethical viewpoints branch into a position that acknowledges the reality of living in an imperfect world (Cassidy 2006:121). Cassidy explains this ethical view surrounding abortions in the following manner: an abortion under normal circumstances would be morally wrong and unethical, however compassionate flexibility is engaged in when the pregnancy poses a threat in a severe manner to the life of the mother either physically or mentally (Cassidy 2006:121).

Geisler provides further insight into the foundations of the beliefs of those who pertain to this ethical viewpoint (Although he does not pertain to this ethical view). Abortion should only be justifiable when a higher moral principle is being served (Geisler 1971: 220). Abortion is morally acceptable if the mother is at high risk and the actual life of the mother is of more value morally than that of a foetus because a foetus in this argument is a sub-human, in that it has not reached its full potential of a human (Geisler 1979:212).

Morally acceptable abortions would also be recognized when conception takes place without consent, thus in the instances of rape and incest. Abortions that are done for eugenic reasons, deformation, retardation and sub-human development are acceptable, however, need to be practiced with discernment according to this ethical viewpoint (Geisler 1979:221).

Ethically if a human viability is associated with independence as in the case of this ethical viewpoint, why can it not be associated with heartbeat, brainwaves or self-awareness? In a broad sense many born people are still dependent on others for life; premature babies, people with disabilities, some elderly people and even toddlers; they are dependent upon other people to live. Thus it needs to be concluded that unborn and people are first people and secondly viable (Alcorn 1994:64).

2.2.4.4 Abortion: Adoption, not Abortion

The last ethical view is derived from the ethical viewpoint of absolutism. It is not a main ethical standing, but for the sake of the purpose of the research it will be mentioned. This ethical viewpoint stems from a plea to mothers that Mother Theresa voiced; in which she stated that if people were to bring to her the unwanted babies, that she would find them homes (Cassidy 2006:121). This option is opened in order to plea for the unborn babies' lives, however creating a space for mothers to keep their babies without abortion (Cassidy 2006:122). A foetus is not sub-human, a blob or a thing, it is a person. The unborn are not less human and thus more expendable because they have not fully developed into infants or infants more expendable than toddlers, or toddlers more expendable than teenagers, or teenagers more expendable because they have not developed into adults (Alcorn 1994:55).

2.3 Abortion: Creation and Personhood in Scripture

2.3.1 The worldview of a Believer and Unbeliever

Each person walks with a specific worldview which has been moulded and formulated from various authorities in their lives such as medical practitioners, parents or teachers. And authorities they would see as enlightened such as Ghandi, prophet Muhammad or Mother Theresa. A worldview is also very sharply formulated by ones experience and background in ones upbringing. Our worldview rests on what is ultimate truth in our understanding and framework.

For the unbeliever absolute truth is often a condemned thought, however for the believer absolute truth is of foundational value (Cassidy 2006:112). For the unbeliever purpose, destiny and future may be an abstract ideal to achieve. For the believer purpose, destiny and future are strong fundamentals that are driven by a strong sense of calling from God and His ordained days. The unbelievers' worldview may hold a low regard for human life, as seen in theories such as evolution and big bang theories. But for the believer human life is the crown of God's creation, man is pivotal in Gods order and is of high value and worth.

When at first observing and analyzing the above ethical viewpoints that exist within the abortion field at first one might gasp with horror at man's thinking, or agree strongly with a specific ethical position. However, in order to objectively study and analyze each viewpoint with the various facets of thinking that make up the whole, one as the researcher or reader needs to understand the worldview, the spectacles, through which the writer or researcher is stating their case.

Cassidy formulates this understanding well amongst his readers. The strongest worldview currently being promoted through various humanitarians and other social justice voices finds its foundation of argument upon the belief that all reality is only made up of matter (Cassidy 2006:112). Some pertain to the thought of naturalism others to the humanistic thought in which man is at the centre and this breathes individualism (Cassidy 2006:112). Such a worldview cannot give us a basis for values, ethical principles or moral decisions as a framework to accurately answer the hard questions in life (Cassidy 2006:112).

However, for the believer their worldview is subject to that which is the standard of truth, the Bible. And it is moulded and developed through the objective truth of scripture and fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3: 16).

2.3.2 The Personhood in Scripture

Ethical viewpoints need to be subjected to the measuring rod of scripture (1 Timothy 3:16). The worldview of the believer concerning specifically the sphere of personhood and the worth of the unborn can be extracted from the scriptures.

The strongest scriptures that promote the personhood can be seen in Psalm 139: 13-16 in which the Psalmist brings forward the truth of the uniqueness of each person. Secondly, Jeremiah 1: 5, Isaiah 49: 1, Galatians 1:15 and Psalm 22: 9-10 states clearly that God thought out each person even before they were conceived. From Genesis 1: 26-27, we see that God created men and women in His image, He formed them and breathed life into them.

A second viewpoint from scripture that shows the personhood in scripture is the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth during their pregnancies (Luke 1: 39-45); John leapt in the womb of Elizabeth when Jesus in Mary's womb came near; if a baby is to be considered sub-human, surely this interaction would not have taken place. From these above mentioned scriptures, it can clearly be seen that the personhood of the unborn was recognized and valued; and no unborn is viewed as a sub-human, as or of lesser value than a fully developed human.

Within scripture, abortion is not clearly spoken of as would a subject such as marriage. Could the question then be asked, is abortion unimportant to the scriptures? The answer would be no, but the question to abortion is answered in a different light. In perspective of the research; throughout church history it could be seen that there was not only a moral decay in the actions in many church establishments but also the decay in truth; it seems that through the ages the Good News was submitted to man's experience of God and Science; thus much teaching has become friends with the sin and not the sinner because speaking the truth in love has been manipulated and jeopardized.

Alcorn (1994:242) adds to the above argument stating that the church is to challenge and guide the moral positions and the morality of society, not mirror it. He furthers by stating that the personhood of the unborn in scripture is clear, Christ proved His love for the unborn becoming one and spending nine months in the womb. Christ died for all, and laid out a plan for every person's life. Children are a gift and blessing from God (Psalm 127:3-5) and we must learn to treat them as Christ does as seen in scriptures such as Deuteronomy 10:18 and Psalm 82:3-4 (Alcorn 1994:242). The Scripture teaches Gods sovereignty with regards to human life and pregnancy when it teaches through multiple scriptures that God open and closes the womb, Ruth 4:13, 1 Samuel 5, 10, 20 and Genesis 29:31-32 (Ankerberg and Weldon 1989:200).

2.4 Abortion: Current Abortion Laws in South Africa and the Ethical Implications

Having established the historical, legal and ethical developments regarding the various positions on abortion; the researcher will further position the mini thesis through a description and a brief assessment of the current abortion laws in South Africa (SA). SA is seen as a very liberal country in terms of its policies. As many of the regulations in SA are seen to promote values that are in sync with the various Enlightenment controversies. In view of the above mentioned scriptures as well as the current ethical viewpoints held by those in the field of ethics it is to the benefit of the research to discuss current abortion laws in South Africa.

2.4.1 Abortion: Current South African Laws

Current abortion Laws in South Africa were established in 1996 in Parliament, known as the Termination of Pregnancy Bill Act, which stipulates the following Laws and conditions for abortion to take place:

- Abortions may be performed on demand up and till the 12th week of gestation by any medical doctor or trained and registered nurse.
- In the case of abortion being done within the 13th and 20th week of gestation abortion may only be performed on the grounds of medical reasons and or due to reasons such as rape, incest and if the pregnancy would severely influence of the woman's economic and social status (Phila Legislative Update 1996).

Abortion Laws specifically concerning adolescents state the following:

- Abortion services are to be readily available under the same requirements as stated above.
- However, if the adolescent is older than the age of 12 they do not need parental or guardian consent, however the Doctor, midwife or nurse

performing the procedure needs to advise the patient adolescent to inform their parents or guardian,

- If the patient does not wish to do so they cannot be forced (Phila Legislative update 1996).

All persons wanting to have an abortion need to be informed of pre-abortion and post-abortion counseling facilities that the state provides; however this is not compulsory treatment (Phila Legislative update 1996).

2.4.2 Abortion: Ethical implications and Key Questions in Formulating Conclusion

The Collins dictionary defines ethics as being the moral code or philosophy by which a person or, in this case also the government, governs their actions and the rules and standards that ought to govern moral standard (Collins English dictionary 1991:20).

Some researchers have noted the abortion laws of South Africa as turning full circle moving from a restrictive law to a liberal law (Engelbrecht 2005:10). It was also noted during further research that abortion Laws were founded with the foundational thought to create a more liberal setting in which abortions can be performed in order to prevent older women and adolescent women from seeking backstreet abortions and to prevent the medical risks that go with it (Engelbrecht 2005:9). It was however noted that although abortions have been legalized, adolescent women are still prone to seek backstreet abortions (Engelbrecht 2005:10).

Key questions need to be asked; the reason for legalised abortion seems to be preventative in nature. It seemingly aims to prevent certain medical risks and implications such as infections, malpractice as well as emotional or psychological conditions that could occur from abortion. Therefore within the research field of adolescent abortions, are emotional conditions being prevented in light of abortion being legalised?

2.5 Conclusion

It could be concluded that there are three main ethical viewpoints within the area of abortion; Pro-choice, Absolution and Abortion in specific cases and from these minor views are branched. In light of these views it can be seen that South African Laws have adopted ethical viewpoints from both Pro-choice and Abortion in specific cases or circumstances. And lastly have adopted these abortion laws in order to create a more liberal setting in order that abortions are monitored and can be done in a setting of safety. However, the research question which prompted this study in its brief treatment of the current literature still fails to address the counseling need that exist for adolescents who have been subject to a willful or induced termination of pregnancy.

Chapter: 3

The Emotional Development of an Adolescent

3.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of the following chapter is to do a study on the general emotional development and capacity of a teenager. This is to ascertain the emotional capacity of an adolescent and their ability to make objective decisions with the understanding of resulting consequences. These results will then be analyzed in the chapter to follow in order to determine whether a teenager has the emotional abilities to make the high level moral decisions pertaining to abortion objectively; understanding the emotional and physical implications. The ethical implications will be discussed with reference to the issue of consent.

3.2 The developmental stages within a human being

3.2.1 Definition: Adolescent Development

Adolescence is described as the developmental period between the age of twelve and twenty (these are approximate ages), it can also be described as the period when an individual becomes more independent of parents and begins to assume a more adult position (Sigelman and Rider 2009:4). Adolescence is often described as the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood (Sigelman and Rider 2009:8).

During this developmental phase, youth explore their identities, it is a time when emotions are peaking and often extreme peaks can be experienced. Teenagers are also self-focused and believe they have limitless possibilities, often irrational in some ways (Sigelman and Rider 2009:8).

Adolescent development can be described as the systematic changes and continuities that occur in the teenager; there are physical developments, cognitive developments and psychological developments that occur (Sigelman and Rider 2009:3). The adolescent is faced with identity anxiety, biological changes, developmental stress and emotional development (Gouws and Kruger 1994:98). This development takes place in the setting of family, school and peer pressures, culture, society and self (Gouws and Kruger 1994:98).

3.2.2 The Stages of Development

Erick Erikson describes development of the human personality as the result of both genetics and social influences (Gouws and Kruger 1994:80). Erickson notes that the development of an individual is based upon certain life stages; these stages are influenced by individual abilities and interests. Exterior influential demands that are placed on the individual from society also play a role in human development (Gouws and Kruger 1994:80).

During the adolescent period of young girls, there are physical and hormonal changes taking place; these young girls either become intrigued by sexual experiences of various forms, or they become shy and withdrawn (Sigelman and Rider 2009:155). Adolescent boys seem to embrace the maturation process with a greater openness, the factor of shame and shyness is not as present as it is in teenage girls. The early onset of maturation in young males is more welcomed than it is in girls (Sigelman and Rider 2009:155).

Girls experience very mixed emotions during this time of development and worry about their physical appearance and their emotions are unstable due to the hormonal changes (Sigelman and Rider 2009:155). Erickson notes this stage of development as the stage of identity versus role confusion, he notes that teenagers begin to ponder on the ideas of who they are, or would like to be, they also establish social identities but remain confused in the sense of whether they are adults or children (Sigelman and Rider 2009:36).

Erickson further suggests that when one stage of development is not complete, that it will have an effect on the next developmental stage. He defines four stages of development in the childhood phase; trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, initiative versus guilt and industry versus inferiority (Sigelman and Kruger 2009:36). What is of interest is that the stages of industry versus inferiority and identity versus role confusion overlap and seem directly influenced by one another as the one ends and the other begins at the age of twelve (this will be important to note in the chapter to follow).

3.2.3 Adolescent capacity in reasoning and understanding in decision making

Piaget's cognitive theory discusses the capacity of reasoning and understanding in decision making. The theory states that a teenagers manner of thinking, is more logical than it is during childhood, however it is more idealistic (teenagers spend much time concerned about the future, and ideologies about the future) and abstract in nature (Santrock 1998:57).

Teenagers explore and experience a time of increased decision making. This is a time period in which questions such as which friends to choose, which person/s to date, whether to partake in sexual experiences or not and which future vocation to choose. These are some of the questions being asked; these seem to be some of the decisions established during adolescence (Santrock 1998:139). Some experts noted the idea that older adolescents are able to make more objective decisions than younger adolescents. This was due to the emotional and cognitive development that was furthered, specifically in the area of consequences due to actions (Santrock 1998:139).

Santrock (1998:139) takes into account a study done with teenagers of different ages concerning a medical decision that needs to take place in their lives. He notes that older teenagers were more prone to examine the situation from different perspectives, take advice and analyse it as well as explore other options in the situation. Santrock (1998) also notes in his study specifically in the field of adolescence, that older teenagers, bordering on young adulthood where more likely

to take into account the consequences of their decisions and the effects there of, on the future and current circumstances.

3.3 Contributing Factors to Emotional Development

3.3.1 What factors contribute to or inhibit emotional development?

Affective development in the adolescent years can be described as the process whereby a child is taken on a journey and taught a greater measure of independence within good boundaries and overseeing from parents, teachers and society, however primarily parents (Gouws and Kruger 1994:112).

Because adolescence is a period where there is much transition and development taking place, it is a time in which the teenager may feel or experience something of a personal crisis. Factors such as divorce, step family, working parents, culture and ethnicity would be factors that inhibit the development of the adolescent emotionally (Santrock 1998:201). Divorce causes the adolescent either to become rebellious in expressing the hurt or to withdraw and play mediator between parents conflict, the effects are seen to last for up to two years (Sigelman and Rider 2009:459).

Step family is a major transition for children and more so for teenagers; this is because there is now a division in family for the teenager. There is a split in authority and this creates an environment where the teenager may feel unsure, thus parental authority is divided and not continuous in most cases which is vital in this time of transition (Sigelman and Kruger 2009:461).

Working parents may cause teenagers to feel lonely and neglected, because it is a time where many things may feel unknown to the teenager. Parent's affirmation and involvement play a vital role in adolescence. However, when parents force cultural expectations on a teenager it causes stress; teenagers are discovering and developing their own world and when parents put undue expectations the teenager may feel confused or they may feel unaccepted when deciding on other cultural patterns (Sigelman and Kruger 2009:449).

3.3.2 What Role does Parents, Family and Friends Play in Emotional Development?

In order to accurately mentor an adolescent through this phase in their lives parents need to create an environment in which teenagers are given the opportunity to embrace independence however maintain communication, interest and adequate control over the developing individual. Creating a suitable model that a teenager can identify with as parents because the foundation of the parent-teenager relationship is based on respect and love; these factors play a vital role (Gouws and Kruger 1994:13).

Psychologists note that parenting styles and parent influences have the largest effect on the development of the teenager's identity and emotional development. Parents seem to be the blueprint to which teenagers look in their emotional, social and identity development (Gouws and Kruger 1994:112).

Santrock (1998:190) in his extensive study of adolescent development makes this note; when there are healthy and communicative relationships between the teenager and his/she parents there is a lower probability that the adolescent will move into a world completely isolated from their parents. Thus adolescents are more likely to be to explore the social world in a healthy manner and be socially competent.

Siblings also play a vital role, however this is dependent on the age differences between siblings. During the time of adolescence sibling rivalry is likely to increase as each begins to explore his or her identity and territory, however this can be a positive experience in a healthy family setting (Stability, honesty, love and respect between parents in their marriage, as well as the parents and the children). Siblings are more likely to value one another more as they age in their adolescent journey (Santrock 1998:201).

Family is to be an environment in which the teenager can be assisted and guided. Teenagers should be treated in a manner that is appropriate to their age in development, this creates an environment where teenagers feel affirmed in their development rather shy and exposed.

Peers play an important role; during adolescence the teenager finds a liberty to make decisions of who to be friends with or not. It is a time where they choose their social and moral boundaries. Research highlighted that peers opinions and advice was often favored above family. Thus it seems that the influence of peer judgments, or class mate opinions increases in older adolescents (Santrock 1998:322).

3.4 Scriptural Viewpoints Concerning the Emotional Development of an Adolescent

3.4.1 The Role of the Parents

Parents play a vital role in a child or adolescents life as established in the above research. However, this is also found to be scripturally true. Ephesians 5: 22 – 6: 4 reveals God's heart for the family. There should be order and biblical submission (Peppler 2003:46).

The father is the head of the house, the mother/ wife is in submission to the husband and the children are in submission to both parents. This at first glance may appear to be hierarchical in nature, however this is untrue. 1 Peter 3:7 clearly stipulates that the wife is the weaker vessel, this should not be viewed in terms of position but rather function within the family unit. There should be mutual submission within the family unit (position); however the father, mother and children each have different functions from the Lord. Parents are to raise children in the ways of the Lord; parents should instill healthy boundaries for their children, proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 17:6, Ephesians 6:4 (Cloud and Townsend 1992:178).

In order to establish a healthy environment for children, parents have the role of enforcing both positive and negative discipline. Discipline can also be interpreted in the Greek language in scripture as 'Training or teaching', thus positive discipline is teaching a child for a task (Ephesians 6:4). Negative facets are discipline correction, chastisement and consequences as seen in Proverbs 15:10. Parents are there to enforce external boundaries that instill internal boundaries in children (Cloud and Townsend 1992:179).

Parents are there to facilitate adolescence; there is a role change in the parent and teenager relationship. Teenagers are no longer controlled by parents but influenced. There is an increase of freedom and negotiation but also responsibility (Proverbs 13: 4).

Thus parents take the role of a teacher, thus teaching children in the ways of the Lord and bringing them up in such a manner that they are able to make wise decisions and have a clear sense of healthy internal boundaries that create an environment of safety for teenagers to mature in, Proverbs 22:15 (Cloud and Townsend 1992:200).

3.4.2 The Role of the Adolescent

The role of the adolescent within family unit is vital. From research it was found that Teenagers are in a development stage, and the vital role parents play during this time. From previously mentioned scriptures and such as Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:10 it could be seen that teenagers have the responsibility to listen and learn and make wise decisions from the blueprint parents and scripture have given them (Cloud and Townsend 1992: 200). Children are to honor and obey their parents, taking heed to their parent's council (Peppler 2003: 46).

When children honor their parents, it seems from scripture that they will prosper (Ephesians 6: 1). Thus teenagers should honor the freedom that is entrusted to them by their parents and not use it in an unwise manner or abuse freedom (Cloud and Townsend 1992: 200). Teenagers should also receive discipline from parents and not be resilient, Proverbs 12: 1, Proverbs 3: 12 and Hebrews 12. It is clear that although it is a developmental period, the teenager is not absent from responsibility.

3.5 Conclusion

Thus in conclusion it could be said that Adolescence is a vital stage in the development of the child. Adolescence is a time in which there is sexual maturation, a period of solidifying personal identity and career learning and love choices.

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. It seems adolescence is the foundation laying for the course of the teenager in adulthood. And thus a healthy and well defined environment is of utter importance.

Chapter: 4

The Development of an Adolescent in Crisis

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on discussing the effects that crisis have on the development of an adolescent. The cognitive abilities of an adolescent will be discussed as well as the ethical issues that are facing the health care of the adolescent.

4.2 The Impact of Crisis on the Development of an Adolescent

4.2.1 Crisis Explained

The stage of adolescents has been described as a period of transformation and development in which the child progresses to the mature nature of a young adult. During this stage there is a large focus on the development of personal identity, cognitive abilities, emotional maturity and moral development. As previously noted it is a stressful time for the teenager as they begin to discover themselves and find a greater sense of liberty and independence from parents (Santrock 1998:190).

Philkill and Walsh proposed a specific research into the field of adolescent crisis, and came forth with the following definition; a crisis is a set of circumstances or realisations that has an effect on, or poses a threat to a persons' emotional or physical health (2003:40). Fundamentally a crisis is comprised of three phases and levels. Pre-crisis is the stage where the person although faced with challenges, is in a position to overcome them successfully. The second phase is called the stage of crisis. This stage occurs when there is a sudden realisation or a circumstance that places the person in a position where they seem overwhelmed, unable to rationalise a way through and often has been described as being a dark pit. The last stage is the post crisis stage where the person has resolved and worked through and dealt

with the crisis situation. They have made choices that have led to freedom and closure from the crisis (Philkill and Walsh 2003:4).

Choices are often subjective in a time of crisis; Subject to one's emotional state and well-being, circumstances and afflicting pressures. Good choices will vary for each individual (That which is good for one may not be good for another); however this is not stated in the sense of evil becoming good for a person. But rather that every individual, in the similar crisis may face the crisis and experience the journey differently from others. Good choices will be those that lead to freedom and closure. Bad choices will lead to bondage and create further crisis.

There are also three levels of crisis. Thus the degree of crisis in which a person may find themselves may vary depending on the circumstances that are causing the crisis. On the first level they may experience fear, guilt or shame which may develop into rebellion and rejection but it is not a severe crisis. This can be resolved with objective resolution or rational input (Anderson, Zuehlke and Zuehlke 2000:136).

The second level of crisis, the person begins to experience feelings of anxiety, anger and depression which results in compulsive behavioural patterns and lack of self-control. The person may also find themselves with strong feelings of unforgiveness and bitterness (Anderson, Zuehlke and Zuehlke 2000:136).

The highest level of crisis, is a place where a person may experience all of the above mentioned crisis attributes, where the person finds themselves in a place of deep discouragement and sorrow, complete lack of discipline and a strong sense of selfishness (Anderson, Zuehlke and Zuehlke 2000:136). Selfishness in this state could be described as an individual who is unable to function or communicate in a setting that is not fully accommodating to their personal needs. If the situation or setting is not suited to them, they may explode in anger or communicate dislike in a personal tone towards another.

Psychologists have noted that in a time of crisis, because of the nature of the stage of adolescence, teenagers are less likely to express their crisis, grief or turmoil and are more likely to become withdrawn and introspective or isolated in their behaviour.

This is because youth have a strong fear of losing control and a strong fear feeling abnormal. Teenagers thus express their crisis through delinquent behaviours and Somatic ailments. Somatic ailments are physical manifestations of a psychological dysfunction. Teenagers in crisis therefore will often develop severe sickness, such a stomach pains or in more severe cases paralysis or blindness due to psychological stress that is hidden (Sigelman and Kruger 2009:514).

4.2.2 Abortion Crisis and its Effects

Adolescents are more likely to bottle up their feelings and keep it disclosed from their parents, peers or people that are in close relationship too them (Sigelman and Kruger 2009:514). When a teenage girl finds herself in the crisis of an unwanted pregnancy that leads to the decision of an abortion, the latter has direct effect on the development of the teenager. It was found that teenagers that underwent an abortion where more likely to revert back to a place in their childhood where they felt self and often stayed in that position until they sought effective crisis or trauma counseling. Teenagers that were faced with the post abortion crisis often found themselves in the position where they were questioning the morality of what they had done. Thus a majority had questions of whether they had committed murder or not, this has a large impact on the development of the teenagers' moral code (Reisser 1999:44).

In a recent census conducted by Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009:47); teenage pregnancy and abortion with a specific focus on school going learners was performed. The census revealed that teenagers who went through with the pregnancy and gave birth to the 'unwanted child' experience physical, emotional and future consequences as did those who went through with an abortion. However, what was of interest, was that teenagers that refrained from an abortion where found to have experienced the crisis, the emotional and physical implications thereof, less disturbing on a psychological order than teenagers underwent an abortion. Its effect was of a lesser degree and the inhibiting factor on the teenager's development was found to be less severe than those who underwent abortion (Hyam 2002:4).

4.3 The Cognitive Abilities of Adolescents and the Ethical Issues Thereof

4.3.1 The Doctors for Life International Association

The Doctors for Life International Association made a response to the SA Law commissions Child Care Act with respect to the cognitive ability of children to make health care decisions for them. Within this response they formulated extensive research surrounding the cognitive abilities of adolescents with regard to abortion.

The DFL notes that according to the South African Child Law Act of 1995, a teenager from the age of twelve is able to make the decision of whether to undergo an abortion or not, without any formal or informal consent required by health care practitioners. The decision of the adolescent, in most cases is based upon the information that the Termination of Pregnancy clinics or hospital staff provide them with. However, the DFL through their vast and detailed research made valuable statements concerning the cognitive abilities of adolescents to make such decisions (Hyams 2002:2).

The adolescents' ability to make decisions as noted in the previous chapter is not always based on logical reasoning, and secondly it was founded that older teenagers make better decisions than younger teenagers. The DFL make this distinguishing point; adolescents' cognitive ability to make decisions cannot be based on their reproductive or sexual maturation capacities. The emotional system of a teenager is scientifically proven to be a later feature; it does not mature as early as the reproductive system (Hyam 2002:1).

Scientifically, it was proven that teenagers do not function fully like adults in their decision making process. They are not able to consider the risks and benefits of a particular course of action as fully as an adult is able to. Teenagers often embrace the irrational and idealistic thought that they will not suffer the negative consequences of their actions, and therefore are more prone to take risks that others would not.

Specifically with regard to teenage girls, with regard to their cognitive abilities; teenage girls are more likely to engage in emotional thinking and reasoning. They employ two types of reasoning, either deductive reasoning (they will work from a

specific premise and do anything to get to the logical conclusion) or inductive reasoning, (deriving a general principle from particular instances) (Hyam 2002: 3). And it's thus rarely seen that a young adolescent has the ability to make a logical argument that is based on analyzed data and has consistently drawn an accurate conclusion; this is more likely for an older adolescent or a young adult (Hyam 2002: 3).

4.3.2 Ethical Issues Facing Adolescent Health Care

In the case of abortion involving a minor, a person under the age of sixteen, there are various ethical arguments that arise. Firstly, due to the nature of the abortion laws, a sexually abused child may have an abortion without consent from various authorities either parents or guardians, and thus it may exploit the rights of a young child to receive protection from sexual abuse (Hyam 2002: 7). Secondly, there is also the issue of statutory rape, sex with a minor; thus the minor is able to have a confidential abortion, yet the law concerning sex with a minor is being broken, this seems to create a dysfunction in the South African law policy (Avert 2010). Although the law is protective in nature in this regard, it gives the adolescent a choice to abort the baby in the case of rape resulting in a pregnancy. But this too is an ethically disputed matter.

According to the Guttenmacher institute, pregnancy resulting from the case of rape or incest attributes to only one percent of all abortions. Pregnancies resulting due to rape are much lower than what is thought by the average citizen. Furthermore, rape does not need to result in abortion as there are medical preventatives that can be done, preventing an ovum to be formed (Conception does not take place). Rape is never the fault of the victim or the unplanned child but rather guilty party. The guilty party should be punished, not the innocent. However a hard case it is a situation where family friends and the church should offer complete support. In cases where this is not true on a support basis, support should be offered from various institutions such as pregnancy crisis clinics, social workers and educational persons. But the innocent should not be punished (Alcorn 2004: 176).

The third major ethical argument within adolescent abortion is the cognitive abilities of the adolescent to make such a decision. The main arguments that are brought into consideration are the need to create a place of safety for the adolescent. Firstly, safety from backstreet abortions and the high risks thereof, but also the safety of knowing that the abortion is fully confidential; thus parents and guardians cannot play a role in the decision. However, the cognitive ability of the teenager is questioned here; does the teenager considering an abortion have the ability to rationally and objectively make such a decision.

Secular ethicists argue that within medical decisions, if the adolescent is informed on all their options, the positive and the negative effects, the risks and benefits as well as an informative environment that is free from coercion then an adolescent can be thought to be competent (McCabe 1996: 506). Competency is described as the ability to understand. There is a choice that is required, the decision is made with objective reasoning and lastly the information that is provided is appreciated and considered (McCabe 1996: 506).

From the previous chapter, the development of the adolescent, it is seen from scientific research that the cognitive abilities of a teenager only reach maturity in the stages of early adulthood. It was also noted that younger adolescents are more likely to make a choice that is idealistic. Most cognitive researchers state that within a crisis situation few adolescents if any are able to make rational decisions, when it comes to medical consent (Scott et al. 1995: 225). Cognitive abilities are subject to development and exposure. Therefore the ability for a teenager to make a rational decision within a setting of friends cannot be used as evidence for their ability to make more serious decisions such as abortion (Scott et al. 1995: 225).

The fourth ethical issue is the issue of protection for the adolescent. From scientific studies (Which will be noted further in the study) as well as psychological studies it is noted that abortion has in most cases severe adverse effects on the emotional and physical development of the teenager. If this is true, then surely the reasoning for establishing a law is to be questioned. Laws are established in order to create

accountable frameworks of protection, although this not being the only reason it is a factor taken into account.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion it could be said that there is sufficient evidence scientifically that teenagers are developmentally limited and inhibited having undergone an abortion procedure. It could also be said that teenagers have difficulty making health care decisions such as abortion due to underdeveloped cognitive abilities, and often regret their decision immediately after the process or later in adult life, which brings with it deep seated psychological and spiritual distress.

Chapter 5

5.1 Chapter Overview

In the following chapter, having considered the data as recorded in previous chapters; the short term and long term effects that abortion has on the development of an adolescent will be studied. The effects of abortion in general versus the effects of a teenage pregnancy will at some points be discussed in this chapter. The psychological effects will be discussed, the physical implications of an abortion will

be examined and the effects of an abortion on the teenagers' future and the implications thereof will be researched.

5.2 The Psychological Effects of Abortion on the Adolescent

5.2.1 Pre abortion Psychological Effects

Teenagers that face an abortion show different psychological symptoms or disorders than those that have gone through with an abortion. Teenagers facing the crisis of the decision as to whether to choose an abortion or not is often influenced by concerns for the physical changes that may take place in their body (Reisser 1999: 193).

An unwanted pregnancy causes an internal distress with the fear of rejection from parents as well as the social stigmatism that goes with being a teenager and pregnant (Engelbrecht 2005: 9). There is also the social dilemma's that face society in terms of normative behavior of having a child out of wedlock. The teenager may also want to seek the quickest and easiest way out of the crisis without perceiving the possible consequences because of the nature of the crisis (Hyam 2002: 3).

5.2.2 Post Abortion Psychological Effects

The psychological effects of abortion on an adolescent are vast; it will be different in each case, however similarities can be noted. Because of the nature of the developmental stage of adolescence, the period in which a teenager is developing their identity and self-esteem, the observation of a worsened self-image is noted as the loss constitutes an identity problem (Hyam 2002:4). Adolescents are in a time of crisis developmentally in their lives, a loss caused by an abortion decision constitutes further psychological distress.

Some of the psychological distresses that have been noted by pastoral councillors are heightened anxiety and fear levels, as well as strong inclinations toward suicide (Reisser 1999:194). It was also noted that teenagers who had undergone an

abortion experience significant behavioral changes to the two extremes in most cases, such as increased sexual relations or isolation. Some teenagers were also noted to regress emotionally and developmentally to a stage where they felt more secure (Oliver and Bloom 2004:179).

Depression is largely found among teenagers who have undergone an abortion. They often have sudden outbursts of crying, and a sense of worthlessness. Few teenagers admitted to a sense of relief immediately, however, often later in their adult lives it seemed to surface and become a moral question in their lives. Most teenagers also experience uncontrollable and painful memories, like intrusive thoughts and dreams that reoccur causing distress and a sense of being unsure in the teenager (Reisser 1999:60-61).

A British Medical Journal did a review on the psychological effects of abortion on women. In the conclusion of the review it was found that all women who had an abortion felt a sense of guilt and depression. Longer term studies that were performed over a period of five years concluded that up to thirty percent of women have ongoing psychiatric problems. A further comparative study concluded that twenty five percent of women who had an abortion sought psychiatric care on a long term basis, versus three percent of women with no prior abortions. Lastly the study concluded that psychotic disorders were forty percent more common in women that had undergone an abortion than those who had not (Alcorn 1994:154).

5.3 The Effects Abortion has on the Adolescents' Development

5.3.1 The Physical Effects of an Abortion

Apart from psychological disorders that seem to occur during the period of adolescence, there seems also to be new scientific results concerning the effect abortion has on the physical components of the abortion patient. According to research teenagers are at a higher risk to contract a disease or post abortion infection than older women (Hyam 2002:4). The above statement however does not advocate that abortion is permissible due to one's age; however it is valuable to

understand that within the adolescent's development period serious damage could be caused due to abortion procedures. Teenagers have a thirty percent higher risk than older women to have post abortion physical complications. Approximately ten percent of women suffer immediate complications, of which approximately one fifth are to be considered life threatening (Elliot institution 2000).

In a recent study performed amongst South African teenagers that gave birth, it was found that in some cases the physical implications were severe. However the ratio of severe physical implications was found to be less than the ratio that was found amongst those who had had abortions. The most common complications which can occur at the time of an abortion are: infection, excessive bleeding, embolism, ripping or perforation of the uterus, anesthesia complications, convulsions, hemorrhage, cervical injury, and endotoxic shock, fever, second degree burns, chronic abdominal pain, vomiting and gastrointestinal disturbances (Elliot institution 2000).

5.3.2 The Effects Abortion can have on an Adolescents' Future

Oliver and Bloom (2004:180) did a research study on the teacher's role during adolescent abortion. Within this study they specifically did research on the effects abortion has on the teenager's future. The results showed that most adolescents that undergo abortion are likely either to leave school at that point due to the inability to cope with the stress. It was also reported that there was an increase in the individuals' school absenteeism or a poor academic performance. This has permanent effect on the adolescents' educational future.

Abortion often has an effect on the adolescents' life permanently, thus it is unlikely that the teenager would forget the experience. There are a handful of abortion cases amongst teenagers, where the teen is able to walk away and continue normally or adapt to the circumstance as a teenager that gave birth (Oliver and Bloom 2004:180). Women that had recently undergone an abortion were interviewed with the first year, many indicated that they had recovered and expressed some sense of relief. However it was found among these women that post abortion depression was

delayed and in many cases surfaced in later years even as long as ten years later (Alcorn 1994:155).

Research amongst young girls indicated that it was likely that a post abortion teenager will have multiple abortions within her near future. This was found to be the result caused by the un-dealt with emotional crisis of the first abortion. The teenager was found to hope for a quick relief in her younger years, and when she was older, in most cases, here was a sense of shame and guilt and unworthiness to be a mother of a baby and thus the crisis cycle continues (Reisser 1999:195). The opposite was also found true amongst teens that had recently undergone abortions; they would fall pregnant shortly after the abortion process in order to somehow restore or redeem the previous abortion due to a strong sense of guilt and regret. The crisis of post abortion is seen to cause negative results such as drug and alcohol abuse for long periods; these are highly addictive and could lead to death. This also has lasting physical and mental effects on the abuser (Reisser 1999:210).

An abortion may also have an effect on the interpersonal relationships with immediate family members, firstly with parents as well as close friends (Reisser 1996:59). Teenagers were found more prone to abusive relationships after abortion (Reisser 1996:195). This is not only true on a relational level, but it is said to be known that abortion has direct effects on the individuals' future marriage. It has also been noted that abortion in adolescence has strong influence on their relationship with their children they may give birth to in the future (Oliver and Bloem 1994:181).

5.4 Current Crisis Support Systems for Adolescents

According to the current abortion legislation in South Africa, all abortion clinics need to have pre and post abortion services however it is not a compulsory treatment (Phila Legislation Update 1996). This being true, recent findings among adolescents reported that abortion services were not youth friendly, the psychological support was lacking due to lack of space, time and unequipped staff members. Fifty percent of youth reported that they had not received a sex education or family planning advice (Engelbrecht 2005:1).

Although abortion clinics provide services for community members most women are completely unprepared for the psychological consequences of abortion. Most abortion clinic counselors are unequipped and replay inaccurate information. One woman reported that she was informed that the abortion would have no physical pain that the baby was only a mass of cells and that in most cases women do not experience any psychological disorders (Alcorn 1994:156).

Although current abortion Laws seek to protect the adolescent in some measures, providing a sense of confidentiality and protection in some cases. Hard questions need to be asked concerning the accuracy of the pre and post abortive services that are currently being offered by family planning and abortion clinics. If a service of abortion is to be offered, due to the emotional stage of a teenager, surely government should institute strict laws surrounding those services; Such as compulsory abortion information sessions, where youth are informed and empowered to make objective decisions with truthful information concerning the physical and emotional implications as well as the truth concerning the development of the unborn child.

5.4 Conclusion

Thus it could be concluded that abortion has severe effects of the development of the adolescent. The adolescent that gave birth is less likely to experience adverse effects on the future in such intensities as teenagers who went through with an abortion. Teenagers are also likely to have less physical risks than youth that had an abortion, and where less likely to at some point later in their life experience the late onset of crisis when getting married, having additional children, and coping with the setting of family.

Chapter: 6

Conclusion

When incorporating the various elements of the main findings within the research of abortion, the ethical implications and the psychological effects upon adolescent development; it could be said that there is convincing un-bias medical and psychological research evidence that evidences the strong negative effects of abortion on adolescent development.

From an ethical perspective the following deductions can be established; firstly abortion places two lives at risk. Medical evidence is accurate in stipulating that there is life from conception due to brain activity taking place within the first trimester. Secondly the adolescent is at high risk to contract diseases and post abortion infections which pose severe future implications. Thirdly it has been proved through numerous researchers, both in the medical and psychological faculties that adolescent's cognitive abilities are not yet fully developed; more specifically within the area of ability to reason future consequences. Fourthly, pre-abortion patients are not correctly informed, and youth services are found ill equipped.

There is overwhelming evidence that highlights the severe emotional torment that is caused by the abortion procedures on an adolescent. Abortion may be the quick ending to a current crisis, a temporary relief; however the procedure has long term effects on development and the future of adolescents that cannot be overlooked.

It could thereby be concluded that current abortion laws in South Africa are liberal and pose a threat on the functionality and futures of millions of adolescents that are ill informed and are not forced to receive correct information before undergoing the abortion procedure. Adolescents seek the quickest relief in time of crisis; however this holds future developmental implications.

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