

Terminations of Pregnancy in Adolescence - an Individual Approach is Required¹

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The World Health Organization and the United Nations define adolescents as individuals in the 10-19 year age group, but it has been suggested that this period should be expanded up to 24 years of age (1). On the basis of our knowledge that the brain continues to develop even after adolescence, it seems logical to expand the period of adolescence (2). Pregnancy in adolescence may be a problem in public health. It has complex social, economic, cultural, psychological, religious, moral and ethical connotations. It is obvious that the situation differs in many ways depending on whether the pregnancy occurred in early adolescence or nearer the end. Generally speaking, it is not good for children to have children. The problem of adolescent pregnancies is expressed differently depending on social development and cultural affiliation. It is important to accept that tradition and customs cannot be an excuse and justification for harmful behavior towards children. The obstetric outcomes of adolescent pregnancies are often worse than of pregnancies at the optimal age for pregnancy (3). Very often adolescent pregnancies end in abortion. Abortion

in general is a controversial topic, and abortion in adolescence in particular. The age at which a child is able to express consent for sexual intercourse is also controversial. Historically, this age has shifted to a higher age in most countries. The age of 14 years for instance, which in Europe is often the age at which consent to sexual intercourse can be expressed, is very low and the question is how far a child is able to make a responsible decision at that age. Sexual abusers always state that there was consent. Abortion is not only a current risk but also a long-term one in terms of physical, mental, social and spiritual health. The question of the rights of the male partner in the decision on abortion is also raised, and above all the question of the right to life of the unborn child. All this should be taken into account. Ultimately, an important question is whether the adolescent's parents / guardians should have to consent to the abortion (4). The authors Stamenković and Jeremić Stojković in their article presented the main arguments for and against the requirement of parental consent for abortion in adolescents. When this information, if given to the parents, could pose a threat to the life and health of the girl undergoing the abortion, it is in the interests of the pregnant adolescent for the parents not to be involved. However, the answer cannot be unambiguous, every situation is unique. In general,

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this is a very sensitive issue, it is necessary to work to introduce health education within the educational process, prevent unwanted pregnancies, and encourage responsible sexual behavior, to protect adolescents from sexual abuse, to nurture honest, open communication in the family, and open this topic up to the public. It is very important to reduce socio-economical differences in society. With the support of the family and the wider community, adolescent pregnancies can have a good outcome (5).

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