

Abortion: is it morally permissible?

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April 5, 2017

Burlington Christian Academy

Abortion: is it morally permissible?

- Defining abortion
- Why it matters
- The basic pro-life argument
- Exceptions?
- The two best pro-choice arguments
- Bad pro-choice arguments
- Suggestions

What is “abortion”?

Suggested definition #1: “Abortion is prematurely ending a pregnancy”

Examples:

- “A medical abortion is one that is brought about by **taking medications** that will **end a pregnancy**. The alternative is surgical abortion, which ends a pregnancy by emptying the uterus (or womb) with **special instruments**.” – prochoice.org/
- “**What is an abortion?** Abortion is a medical **procedure** that **ends a pregnancy**.” - www.plannedparenthood.org/
- “**What is abortion?** An abortion is the **deliberate** medical process of **ending a pregnancy**.” – www.mariestopes.org.uk/
- “Abortion is the **early ending of a pregnancy**.” – WebMD

What is “abortion”?

Suggested definition #1: “Abortion is prematurely ending a pregnancy”

Problems:

- **Medically induced labor** prematurely ends a pregnancy through medication.
- **A scheduled C-section** prematurely ends a pregnancy through surgery.
- When a **baby is born alive** after an attempted abortion, it is often referred to as a ‘failed attempt at induced abortion.’

This definition is confusing and problematic.

What is “abortion”?

Suggested definition #2: “Abortion is the intentional killing of the unborn.”

Examples:

- “the termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the **death of the embryo or fetus**” – Merriam-Webster
- “Induced termination of pregnancy, involving **destruction of the embryo or fetus.**” – American Heritage Science Dictionary
- “Abortion is when a pregnancy is ended so that it **doesn't result in the birth of a child.**” – www.bpas.org/ (pro-choice org)

What is “abortion”?

Suggested definition #2: “Abortion is the intentional killing of the unborn.”

Objection: The unborn is not alive.

Response:

- “the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the **capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death**” – dictionary.com
- “**Female Germ Cell Aneuploidy and Embryo Death in Mice Lacking the Meiosis-Specific Protein SCP3**” - *Science* 10 May 2002.
- Etc...

What is “abortion”?

Suggested definition #2: “Abortion is the intentional killing of the unborn.”

Objection: Abortion is not ‘killing.’

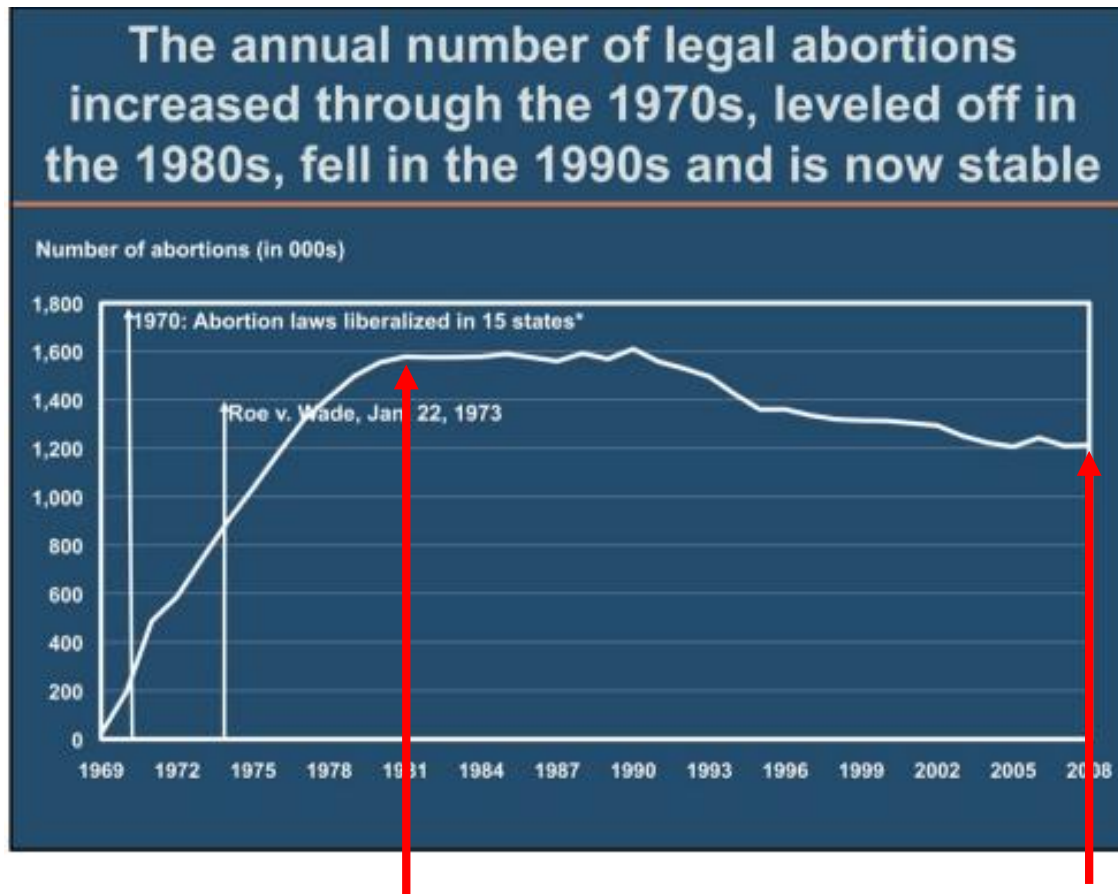
Response:

- “to **deprive of life** : cause the death of” – Merriam-Webster
- “to **deprive of life** in any manner; cause the death of; slay.” – dictionary.com
- Killing **can be** morally permissible. It is morally permissible to kill a plant. Most people think it is permissible to kill animals or to kill a human being in self-defense.

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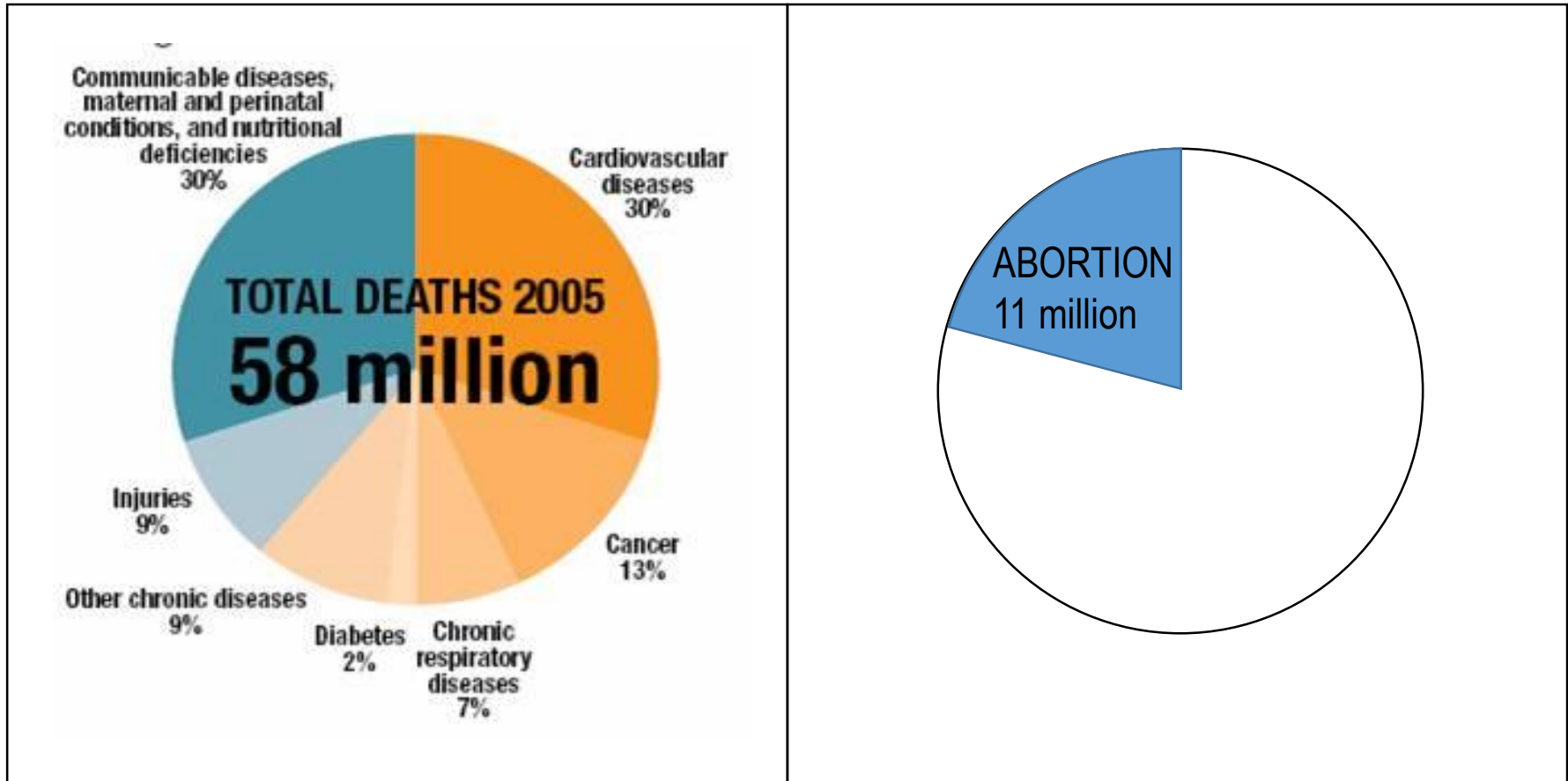
U.S. abortions



26% of all pregnancies

18% of all pregnancies




Abortion worldwide





Sex-selective abortion



Down's syndrome and abortion



 NCBI Resources  How To 



PubMed 

US National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health


Advanced

Format: Abstract  Send to 

[Prenat Diagn. 1999 Sep;19\(9\):808-12.](#)

Termination rates after prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, spina bifida, anencephaly, and Turner and Klinefelter syndromes: a systematic literature review. European Concerted Action: DADA (Decision-making After the Diagnosis of a fetal Abnormality).

[Mansfield C¹](#), [Hopper S](#), [Marteau TM](#).




 **Author information**

Abstract

The aims of this systematic literature review are to estimate termination rates after prenatal diagnosis of one of five conditions: Down syndrome, spina bifida, anencephaly, and Turner and Klinefelter syndromes, and to determine the extent to which rates vary across conditions and with year of publication. Papers were included if they reported (i) numbers of prenatally diagnosed conditions that were terminated, (ii) at least five cases diagnosed with one of the five specified conditions, and (iii) were published between 1980 and 1998. 20 papers were found which met the inclusion criteria. Termination rates varied across conditions. They were highest following a prenatal diagnosis of **Down syndrome (92 per cent; CI: 91 per cent to 93 per cent)** and lowest following diagnosis of Klinefelter syndrome (58 per cent; CI: 50 per cent to 66 per cent). Where comparisons could be made, termination rates were similar in the 1990s to those reported in the 1980s.

PMID: 10521836

[Indexed for MEDLINE]

Race and abortion

The screenshot shows the abc7NY Eyewitness News website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the station's logo, a search bar, and weather information for New York, NY (40°). Below the navigation bar is a red banner with a "WEATHER ALERT Winter Weather Advisory". The main content area features a Toyota advertisement for the 2017 Highlander, highlighting the "Toyota Safety Sense™ Standard". Below the advertisement, a headline reads "41% OF NYC PREGNANCIES END IN ABORTION". Underneath the headline, a small box contains the text "41% of NYC pregnancies end in abortion" and "none". To the right of the headline is a "Find Your Finish" button with the abc7 logo and a "WATCH IT LIVE!" banner with the United Airlines logo.

EYEWITNESS NEWS abc7NY WABC-TV

40° New York, NY CLEAR EDIT

TODAY 42° TONIGHT 34° TOMORROW 50°

SECTIONS TRAFFIC VIDEO New York City New Jersey Long Island Northern Suburbs Connecticut

WEATHER ALERT Winter Weather Advisory

Toyota 1 for everyone Sales Event

2017 HIGHLANDER

Toyota Safety Sense™ Standard. An advanced suite of active safety technology at no extra cost.

Explore Offers ▶

TOYOTA Let's Go Places

41% OF NYC PREGNANCIES END IN ABORTION

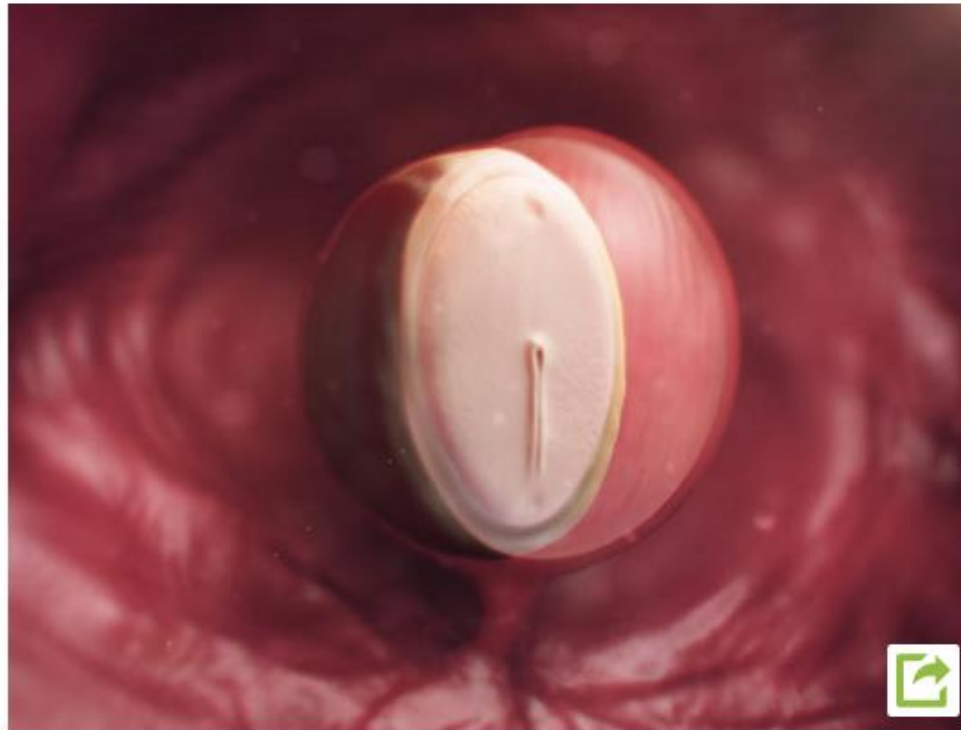
41% of NYC pregnancies end in abortion
none

Find Your Finish abc7

WATCH IT LIVE! UNITED AIRLINES

Specifically non-Hispanic Blacks have a 59.8% abortion rate.

Development of the unborn



4 / 46

4 weeks

Your ball of cells is now officially an embryo. You're now about 4 weeks from the beginning of your last period. It's around this time – when your next period would normally be due – that you might be able to get a positive result on a [home pregnancy test](#).

Your baby is the size of a [poppy seed](#).

Development of the unborn



5 / 46

5 weeks

Your baby resembles a tadpole more than a human, but is growing fast. The circulatory system is beginning to form, and the tiny heart will start to beat this week.

Your baby is the size of a [sesame seed](#).

Development of the unborn



Development of the unborn



13 / 46

13 weeks

This is the last week of your first trimester. Your baby's tiny fingers now have fingerprints, and her veins and organs are clearly visible through her skin. If you're having a girl, her ovaries contain more than 2 million eggs.

Your baby is the size of a pea pod.

Development of the unborn



Development of the unborn



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Discussing abortion

- Reason, logic, arguments
 - Emotional consequences
 - Political consequences
 - Social consequences
-

The basic argument

Definition: Abortion is the intentional killing of the unborn

P1. It is morally wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being

P2. The unborn is an innocent human being

Therefore,

C. Abortion is morally wrong

P1. Is it morally wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being?

- Moral bedrock (size, sex, race, intelligence, nationality, etc...)
- Differences are not relevant to moral worth:
 - Size
 - Level of development
 - Environment
 - Dependency
- Historical precedent

P2. Is the unborn a human being?

- “human being - any individual of the genus Homo, especially a **member of the species Homo sapiens**.” – dictionary.com
- “[The] **fertilized ovum**, known as a *zygote*, is a large diploid cell that is the **beginning**, or *primordium*, of a **human being**.” - Moore, K. L. *Essentials of Human Embryology*. Toronto: B.C. Decker Inc, 1988, p.2
- “Embryo: An organism in the earliest stage of development; in a man, **from the time of conception** to the end of the second month in the uterus.”
- Dox, Ida G. et al. *The Harper Collins Illustrated Medical Dictionary*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993, p. 146

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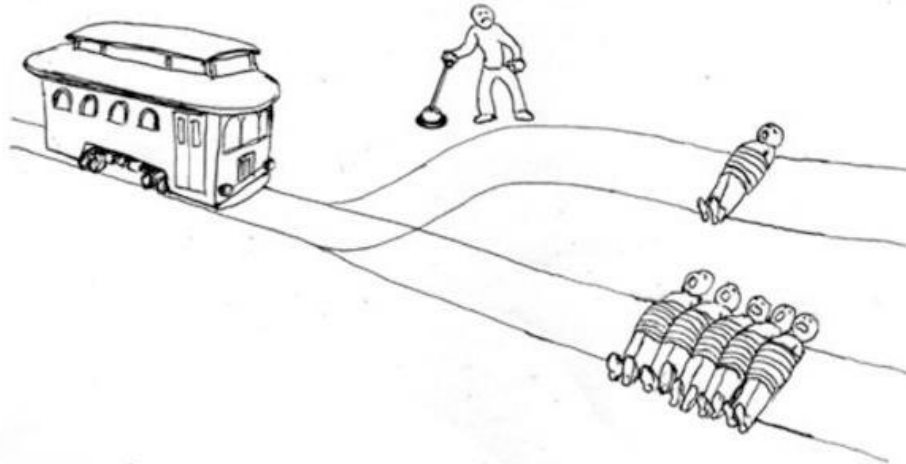
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Life of the mother

- Death of baby is foreseen, not intended
- Choice between one death or two deaths
- Trolley problem



Rape and incest

- Morality, not legality
- Value of unborn does not depend on circumstances of conception
- ~1% of abortions

Was a victim of rape	1	1
Became pregnant as a result of incest	<0.5	<0.5

Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2005, 37(3):110–118

- Real agreement or bluff?

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Denying P1: Not all the unborn have a right to life

- Mental function as basis for right to life:
 - “Human babies are not born self-aware, or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons.” – Princeton philosopher Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*
 - “The fetus acquires the moral standing that you and I have when it first begins to have conscious desires.” – CU philosopher David Boonin, *A Defense of Abortion*
- Awareness of pain as basis for right to life
- Viability as basis for right to life

Denying P1: Not all the unborn have a right to life

Viability and its implications:

- Geography and right to life
- Technology and right to life
- Disability and right to life

Denying P1: Not all the unborn have a right to life

Awareness of pain and its implications:

- Comatose adults
- Anesthetized adults
- Congenital insensitivity to pain

Denying P1: Not all the unborn have a right to life

Mental function and implications:

- Mentally disabled adults
- Comatose adults
- Elderly adults
- Premature infants in the future
- Newborns: “the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee.”- Princeton bioethics professor Peter Singer in *Practical Ethics*

Denying P1: Bodily autonomy is more important than the life of the unborn

Bodily autonomy and implications:

- Bodily autonomy of both men and women is normally heavily restricted
- Absolute bodily autonomy would justify practices currently accepted as highly immoral
- Most abortion is active, not passive
- Absolute bodily autonomy would justify the killing of babies in the birth canal

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“My body, my choice”



“Clump of cells”



MargieBonz > one time i ate a salad without cheese

5/05/16 1:23am

It's just the way of conservatives acting like a fetus, which is a **clump** of cells with no idea of its existence, is the same thing as a woman. Whether that be a



paige #아름다워
@hyungwno

Follow

the "baby" doesnt have thoughts or emotions.
It's a clump of cells literally shut up

What Would Reagan Do @WWRD_AG

@girlswithtoys What about the BABY's body and LIFE??? Your convenience doesn't trump the life of the baby. #ProLife #DefundPP

10:06 AM - 8 Mar 2017

1



Reply to @hyungwno



tanya
@Luminary5SOS

Follow

People are so quick to defend a clump of cells over actual humans who are alive and suffering

8:05 PM - 7 Mar 2017



Reply to @Luminary5SOS

“Keep your rosaries off my ovaries”



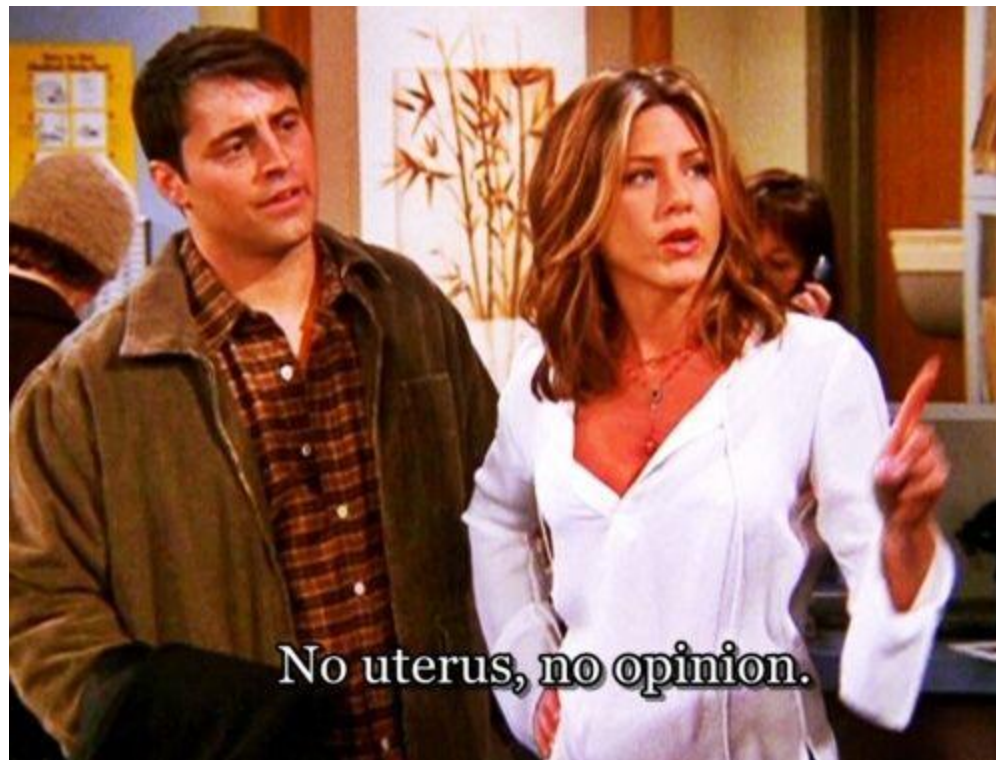
“Don’t like abortion? Don’t have one?”

AGAINST ABORTION?

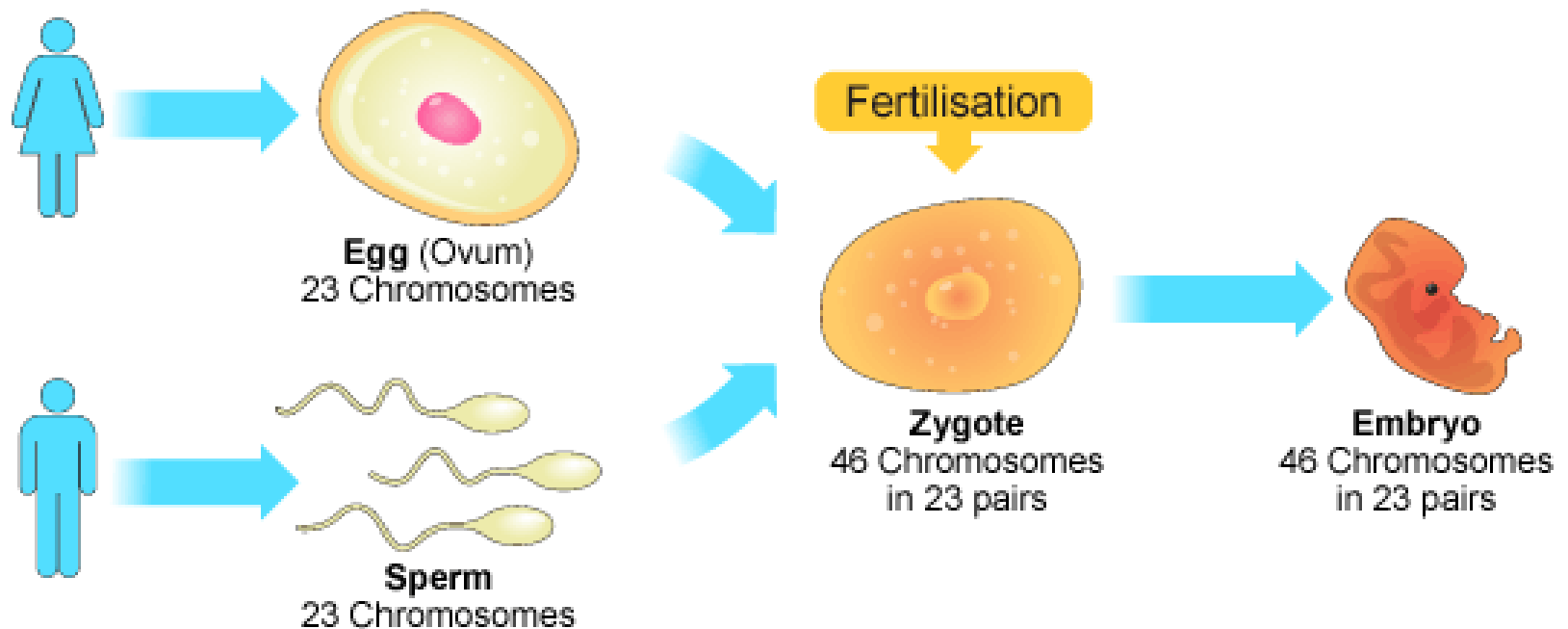
Then don't have one.

www.CarryaBigSister.com

“No uterus, no opinion”



“Skin/sperm/egg cells are human”



“Pro-lifers are bad”

“misogynists”

“pro-birth, not pro-life”

“bigots”

Yes!

“judgmental”

“haters”

“controlling female sexuality”

“unwilling to adopt”



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How to talk about abortion

- Always return to the two central questions:
 - “What is the unborn?”
 - “Can we kill it?”
- Morality, not politics
- Be gracious
- Ask questions
- Share the gospel