
WMA DECLARATION ON THERAPEUTIC ABORTION

Adopted by the 24th World Medical Assembly, Oslo, Norway, August 1970
and amended by the 35th World Medical Assembly, Venice, Italy, October 1983
and the 57th WMA General Assembly, Pilanesberg, South Africa, October 2006

1. The WMA requires the physician to maintain respect for human life.
2. Circumstances bringing the interests of a mother into conflict with the interests of her unborn child create a dilemma and raise the question as to whether or not the pregnancy should be deliberately terminated.
3. Diversity of responses to such situations is due in part to the diversity of attitudes towards the life of the unborn child. This is a matter of individual conviction and con-science that must be respected.
4. It is not the role of the medical profession to determine the attitudes and rules of any particular state or community in this matter, but it is our duty to attempt both to ensure the protection of our patients and to safeguard the rights of the physician within society.
5. Therefore, where the law allows therapeutic abortion to be performed, the procedure should be performed by a physician competent to do so in premises approved by the appropriate authority.
6. If the physician's convictions do not allow him or her to advise or perform an abortion, he or she may withdraw while ensuring the continuity of medical care by a qualified colleague.