

## *Editor's note*

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# Termination of pregnancy

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THE ACCOMPANYING REVIEW,<sup>1</sup> PREPARED BY UMBERTO Squarcia on behalf of his listed colleagues, addresses an issue that is becoming of increasing importance. It is crucial, therefore, that the issue be properly debated and discussed. Termination of pregnancy is itself an emotive issue, and one which polarizes opinion. The paradox involved is illustrated by those in the United States of America who have considered themselves so committed to the preservation of unborn fetuses that they have considered it justified to murder those performing terminations. I must admit that, for myself, such logic is hard to understand. So it is for myself with the opinion expressed so forcefully by Squarcia and his colleagues. I agree totally with their concluding sentence "the decision to be made ... should be a confrontation between her own needs, her own personal condition, and the needs of society." In my opinion, the needs of society at present, and the likely needs in the future, are such that the option of termination cannot be excluded, as Squarcia and his colleagues would seem to prefer. I recognize, at the same time, that this is merely my opinion, and that it conflicts diametrically with the view expressed by Squarcia et al. Others

will hold equally polarized views. So as to try to present the issue in as balanced a fashion as possible, therefore, I have asked those who are specifically involved with the diagnosis of fetal cardiac malformations, and the subsequent counselling of afflicted families, to contribute to the debate. I have also asked two of my immediate colleagues, with a direct interest and expertise in the moral and ethical aspects, to add their commentary. I recognize that many of you, our readers, will wish to contribute to the debate. We will be pleased to publish pertinent correspondence in subsequent issues. This topic is too important simply to be swept under the carpet.

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### Reference

1. Squarcia U. Fetal diagnosis of congenital cardiac malformations: a challenge for physicians as well as parents. *Cardiol Young* 1996; 6: 256-257.