

# THE D&X ABORTION METHOD

by  
Bill Muehlenberg

All methods of abortion stop the heart-beat of a living baby, but one method is especially gruesome. This method, known as the Dilation & Extraction method (D&X) is performed in many places in Australia. One Brisbane doctor has made a name for himself in performing these abortions. The medical doctor of Planned Parenthood Australia, Dr David Grundmann is a proud proponent of late-term abortion, and particularly D&X abortion. This procedure can be performed on unborn babies anywhere from 13 to 32 weeks old. Grundmann thinks this is an especially good form of “family planning” because there is “no chance of delivering a live baby”.

The D&X method is barbaric. As pictured on page 2, the birth canal is dilated and the baby is turned (1). Next the abortionist pulls the baby out with a forceps (2). He then delivers the baby’s body feet first, leaving the head inside (3). Scissors are then inserted into the base of the skull of the live baby and spread to enlarge the hole (4). The brains are then sucked out with a suction catheter (5).

The difference between the D & X procedure and homicide is about three inches. If the head had also been taken out of the mother, the doctor would have a legal requirement to do all he can to save the child. But by leaving the head in, he can perform his “family planning” technique without fear of consequence.

Because of the horrific nature of this killing, Ohio has recently become the first American state to outlaw the procedure. Concern about the “pain and cruelty” experienced by the child was at the heart of the legislation. Recently both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate voted to ban “partial-birth abortions”. (President Bill Clinton vetoed this however.)

We now know without doubt that foetuses in the second trimester experience pain. For example, *The Lancet* recently reported that unborn babies exhibit a full range of pain responses, ranging from “vigorous body and breathing movements” to “a hormonal stress response to invasive procedures” (9 July 1994). Bare in mind that the painful procedure is often performed on babies who are viable, i.e., who can survive an early birth. Indeed, premature babies respond to the soft touch of a nurse’s or mother’s hand. How much more the sharp cold scissors as it pierces his or her little neck?

“Ordinary” methods of abortion are equally painful. As John Noonan says, “the application of a sharp knife to the skin and the destruction of vital tissue cannot but be a painful experience for any sentient creature. It lasts for about ten minutes.... Hypertonic saline solution causes what is described as ‘exquisite and severe pain’ if, by accident during an abortion, it enters subcutaneously the body of the woman having the abortion. It is inferable that the unborn would have an analogous experience lasting some two hours, as the saline solution takes about this long to work before the fetal heart stops.”

If animals experienced such pain the outcry would be deafening. Animal rights advocates like Peter Singer would be the first to voice moral outrage. Yet when it comes to human suffering, there is only silence. As George Will once put it, “Americans are proud of their humane feelings and are moved by empathy. Thus, we regulate the ways animals can be killed. Certain kinds of traps are banned. Cattle cannot be slaughtered in ways deemed careless about pain. Stray dogs and cats must be killed in certain ways ... But no laws regulate the suffering of the aborted.” If the general public was made aware of the suffering that babies undergo in abortion, especially in D&X, many would have a rethink of their glib “pro-choice” position.

This is exactly why the pro-abortion lobby tries to cover up the facts. As one commentator put it: “It is understandable why the distribution of graphic literature describing and depicting the D&X procedure makes pro-choice people uncomfortable. They don’t like to see their dirty trade secrets revealed any more than a fur seller wants to find a poster of a trapped, dying animal hanging on his showroom window. Both remind us that someone else suffered tremendous pain and agony so we can have our lifestyles of convenience or comfort.”

In the end, it all comes down to a question of values, of right and wrong. People like Grundmann and Singer have sought to limit the concept of personhood. New born babies, says Singer, “are not persons”. Neither are a number of other classes of people. We have heard this sort of rhetoric before Nazi Germany majored in this kind of thinking.

Like Hitler, people such as Grundmann and Singer feel that their ideas are progressive and enlightened. Many others would feel they are bringing us back to the dark ages, to a new barbarism. As commentator Mona Charen says, "The history of morality is the story of broadening, not limiting, our conception of who is a person. Is a slave a person? Our ancestors thought not. Is a woman a person? Not quite the way a man is, people used to think. Is a child a person? Under Roman law, the paterfamilias could kill his offspring with impunity. It is part of the Judeo-Christian, as well as the humanist, tradition to insist that every human being - old or young, sick or well, and yes, wanted or unwanted, is a person."

