



Nonconsensual Insemination

Carmen Cusack*

Nova Southeastern University, USA

*Corresponding author: Cusack C, Nova Southeastern University, USA, Tel: +1800-541-6682; E-mail: carmenmercedescusack@hotmail.com

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Dear Editor-in-chief,

Politically motivated defunding for Planned Parenthood in the United States is a serious issue stirring national debate about reproductive education and medicine, but while the gap between liberal and conservative positions seems to be expanding, one bridge between opposing ideologies is sexual education about nonconsensual insemination. Educational materials appropriately targeted toward adults or minors may focus on abstinence as well as birth control and disease control in order to reduce interpersonal, social, and financial costs. Nonconsensual insemination education may inform females and males about the importance of abstaining from unwelcomed (i.e., nonconsensual) conduct that may result in harmful consequences (e.g. unintended pregnancy and disease transmission). Abstention education could aim to inform individuals about the importance of abstaining from sex when problematic insemination would result and the necessity of clearly articulating a desire to abstain from conduct that could culminate in accidental insemination (e.g. rhythm method). Sex education can focus on consent, rights, and legal consequences of unwelcome conduct (e.g. forcible insemination) and tragic repercussions for victims of nonconsensual insemination (e.g. unanticipated child support obligation). There is no articulated legal right to inseminate or be inseminated by a partner simply because consent for sexual contact has been granted, but educational materials could highlight case-specific variability involved in establishing rights (e.g. proving intimate partner violence) or achieving legal sanctions after nonconsensual insemination has occurred following otherwise consensual sexual contact. This knowledge would demonstrate why abstention or birth control should be deployed to cabin the scope of consensual conduct resulting in predictable and desirable outcomes.

These pedagogical approaches not only inform but may also deter individuals from participating in nonconsensual insemination or placing themselves at increased risk for victimization, and also reduce and clarify misinformation about allegedly intrinsic relationships between penile penetration and ejaculatory penetration.

For more than fifty years, the United States Supreme Court has helped to shape American families and sexuality by ruling in favor of Planned Parenthood and women's rights to have reproductive information, medication, and treatment. Though the Court has limited reproductive rights by siding against Planned Parenthood in some cases, in the future the Court may find in favor of Planned Parenthood in cases that expand reproductive rights or require certain funding. While the American people's values, goals, and visions for reproductive rights or gender equality may continue to be debated at state and federal levels or be redefined by culture over the course of successive generations, educators and funders can assist present and future populations by disseminating information about distinctions between consent for foreplay, sex, and insemination. Consent for insemination legally, cognitively, interpersonally, and socially must be segregated as a distinct form of consent leading to consequences that differ from consequences arising from sex or foreplay. Conservatives and liberals may meet their goals of reducing harmful behaviors when male and female victims are better protected from unwanted sexual conduct and consequences. The result of education about nonconsensual insemination may be abstention from sexual conduct and reduced unintended consequences of insemination and related expenditures.

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