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Abortion

USA - Nebraska Law Sets Limits on Abortion

Governor Dave Heineman of Nebraska signed a law on Tuesday banning most abortions 20 weeks after conception or later, on the basis that a fetus by that stage in pregnancy has the capacity to feel pain. The law, which appears nearly certain to set off legal and scientific debates, is the first in the nation to restrict abortions on the basis of fetal pain. Abortion opponents praised the law and said it was justified by medical evidence gained since Roe v. Wade was decided in 1973. Abortion rights advocates said that the measure was unconstitutional, and that the motive behind it was to set off a challenge to legalized abortion before the United States Supreme Court. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/14/us/14abortion.html>

Italy - Three Regional Governments Move to Block Abortion Drug RU-486

Following last month's regional elections, several newly elected regional heads around Italy have moved to block the sale of the abortion drug, RU-486. Three regional presidents have said that the use of the drug violates the standing abortion law that allows only surgical abortions to be carried out in hospitals. The opposition comes as the first shipments of RU-486 began to arrive at hospitals in Milan and Pisa. In July last year, the manufacturer of the drug in Europe told the Italian Ministry of Health and the Pharmaceuticals Agency (AIFA) that the drug had been associated with the deaths of 29 women. To date, eight women in the U.S. have died after using RU 486, two in England, and one each in Canada, Sweden and France. Despite this information, however, AIFA approved the drug, sold under the brand name Mifegyne, for use in Italy, a move strongly backed by the far left opposition parties. According to the permission of the AIFA, the drug may only be administered in a hospital and, for the moment, is prohibited for sale in pharmacies. Last November, the Italian Senate attempted to block the sale of the drug, citing safety issues.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/apr/10040601.html>

USA - Abortion Bill Could Go To Final Vote

Florida's legislature could take a controversial vote sparked by a local lawmaker's amendment. At issue is requiring women to pay for an ultrasound before seeking an abortion. After two hours of emotional debate, the State Senate approved the amendment 22 to 17. Republican Sen. Andy Gardiner of Orlando offered the amendment that requires women who are seeking an abortion in the first trimester to pay for ultrasound exams. The amendment does not apply if, at the time the woman schedules or arrives for her appointment, a copy of a restraining order, police report, medical record, or other court order or documentation is presented that evidences that the woman is a victim of rape, incest, domestic violence.

<http://www.wesh.com/family/23303165/detail.html>

USA - Book Shows Why Abortion for Young Rape Victim Is Likely to Harm

The news that an 11-year-old girl in Mexico who became pregnant through rape has decided to continue her pregnancy has caused a lot of controversy. Some abortion advocates have argued that the girl in Mexico is too young to continue the pregnancy and should have an abortion, with some even suggesting that it be done despite her expressed wish to have the baby. But a book about women who became pregnant through rape or incest - including young girls in situations similar to this - suggests that, rather than helping the girl recover, abortion is more likely to cause her further psychological harm. *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions and Children Resulting from Sexual Assault*, is based on a survey of 192 women who became pregnant through rape or incest and either had an abortion or continued the pregnancy. The survey found that many of those who had abortions did so due to pressure, demands or even force. Nearly 80 percent of the women in the survey who had abortions said abortion didn't help them. Instead, many reported problems such as depression, substance abuse, broken and abusive relationships, and suicide attempts after abortion.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/apr/10042807.html>

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Cloning

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Euthanasia

UK - Gordon Brown defends his stance on assisted suicide

The Prime Minister has been forced to defend his opposition to legalizing assisted suicide after he was challenged by an assisted suicide campaigner, Debbie Purdy who suffers from the neurological condition MS. He defended his stance, saying: "I have written about this and I have thought about it deeply, and I know that you will probably disagree with me, but I personally think that our duty is to alleviate pain and suffering as much as possible. "I know this from my own experience, my own family's experience, [we] should be able to give palliative care and relieve the suffering." Combined with other people that came out in support of the stance against assisted suicide it gives a clear message. David Cameron said that he personally believes there should not be any change in the law on assisted suicide. During an interview he said: "my personal view is that if assisted dying is legalized, there is a danger that terminally ill people may feel pressurized into ending their lives if they feel they've become a burden on loved ones. I don't believe anyone should be put in this position". Senior Liberal Democrat Vince Cable writing in the Daily Mail declared that he was "personally opposed" to such a move.

<http://www.christian.org.uk/news/gordon-brown-defends-his-stance-on-assisted-suicide/>

Canada - Life with dignity for all Canadians

The Canadian Parliament has voted on MP Francine Lalonde's Bill C-384 to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. This is a deadly cocktail for the vulnerable and disabled, because it is far cheaper to give a lethal injection than to provide the care people deserve. Thankfully we can now report that the Bill C-384 that was mentioned in this article was strongly defeated by a vote of **228 to 59**. Hurray for Canada, Alex Schadenberg and the people that voted against it.

<http://www.saultstar.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2543938>

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Gambling

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HIV/AIDS & STIs

South Africa - Aids vaccine researcher hopeful

In an interview with The Associated Press, Dr Alan Bernstein, executive director of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, cited the world's first successful test of an experimental Aids vaccine. In September, researchers said the vaccine protected one in three people from getting HIV in a large study in Thailand. Bernstein said a comprehensive approach, that includes finding a vaccine, must be taken against Aids. As head of an international group of major vaccine researchers and funders, Bernstein was in South Africa to discuss strategy with UN health and Aids officials. Bernstein said a vaccine would be particularly important for Africa, where prevention and treatment campaigns have proven costly. A vaccine, unlike an expensive lifetime regime of Aids drugs, would be administered every few years. A vaccine "is the most effective public health measure we've come up with," Bernstein said. The International Aids Vaccine Initiative, which focuses on research into vaccines against strains of HIV that are prevalent in the

developing world, says a vaccine must be part of a comprehensive solution. According to a new report summarizing findings presented at a 2009 conference of vaccine researchers, the vaccine hunt is "steadily moving ahead," though HIV presents tough challenges.

http://www.health24.com/news/HIV_AIDS/1-920,55893.asp

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Homosexuality

Uganda - Ugandan MP to be banned from UK if his death penalty bill succeeds

Civil servants in the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the Borders Agency are drawing up plans to block the visa of MP David Bahati if he does not drop legislation that would see consenting adults who have homosexual sex imprisoned for life, and impose the death penalty on those with HIV engaging in sexual activity. One senior British government source said the issue could turn into a "major diplomatic incident if the Ugandans do not back down". Besides rescinding the visa of the backbencher, other options considered have been blocking aid to the Ugandan government. The government has switched its strategy to individual visa blocking amidst signs that threats to withhold aid backfire.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global/2010/apr/19/uganda-death-penalty-gay-mp-banned-from-uk>

California - Cure law finally repealed in California

A law that requires the state of California to seek cures for homosexuality has now been officially dropped by the state Assembly. The legislation dates from the 1950s and sees homosexuals as "sexual deviants." It also requires the state to carry out and fund research on "deviations conducive to sex crimes against children." A Bill to change the law has now passed 62-0 in the Assembly, and will now go to the Senate.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/291252>

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Human Trafficking

South Africa - Research Council report says Government must tackle trafficking

Government and civil society need to take serious action against human trafficking in South Africa, according to a Human Sciences Research Council report released at a National Prosecuting Authority conference on the subject. South Africa is a destination country for long-distance flows of mainly women from Thailand, Philippines, India, China, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and the Ukraine. From within Africa, people are trafficked across the extensive land borders of South Africa. All documented cases are women trafficked for both sexual and labor exploitation," according to a summary of the report. Trafficking of South Africans out of the country was less of a problem, but eight cases were identified between January 2004 and January 2008. Destination countries included Ireland, Zimbabwe, Israel, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Macau. The researchers said they experienced serious difficulties in conducting the study. "South Africa is not collecting even basic national-level data which will allow sound estimates about the scale of the problem. They also had difficulty accessing key informants in government departments, because government databases of contacts were not made available."

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Govt-must-tackle-trafficking-HSRC-20100324>

South Africa - Plan to sensitize kids on human trafficking

A workshop to sensitize schoolchildren about human trafficking ahead of the Soccer World Cup has been launched by the Mpumalanga department of education and the provincial department of justice. The workshop is aimed at teaching teachers, pupils and non-teaching personnel to be on the alert regarding child trafficking. Pupils will be taught tactics that can be used to protect themselves in case of human trafficking incidents. "Everyone in the community must play a role in protecting children, so we urge school management teams and teachers to maintain constant

contact with parents and to closely monitor attendance and the movement of pupils," an education department spokesperson said. Meanwhile, nine Nigerian men arrested for alleged human trafficking, are expected to appear in the Ermelo magistrate's court tomorrow. It is alleged that they forcibly took a number of women from around the country to Ermelo and forced them into prostitution. The police said the victims were given R30 a day for food, and were forced to take drugs. The 12 women, between the ages of 18 and 30, told the police that the men took all their earnings.

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1132193>

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In Vitro Fertilization

India - IVF bill may stop homosexual couple surrogacy

A growing number of male couples from Australia and other Western countries are hiring surrogates in India to bear children, but that might no longer be possible if a draft bill to regulate IVF in India becomes law. It was informed to the Sydney Morning Herald that the homosexual couples will not be allowed to hire surrogates unless and until the homosexual relationships are legalized in India.

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/lifematters/indian-ivf-bill-may-stop-gay-couple-surrogacy-20100425-tlno.html>

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Organ Trafficking

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Pedophilia

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Pornography

South Africa - Public Pornography Must Be Eradicated

Minister of Home Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Deputy Minister Gigaba and various senior department officials are fully committed to eradicating child pornography in South Africa and strictly regulating adult pornography in the public domain and dissemination in adult shops. In his speech, Gigaba justified his strong conviction that the rights, protection and dignity of women and children must take precedence over other rights. He said the Law Reform Commission had been asked to investigate whether pornographic material broadcast on TV, carried on the internet and downloaded to cell phones could also be banned. Gigaba said he was delighted that satellite TV provider Multi-Choice had shelved plans to introduce a 24-hour porn channel. "We applaud all South Africans who stood firm in the rejection of this nefarious idea, and regret that Multi Choice even thought of it. "We must continue to steadfastly refuse to accept that pornography be brought into our living rooms." The Film and Publications Amendment Act would assist the government in stamping out child pornography.

<http://www.familypolicyinstitute.com/>

Canada - New book targets the blind

A Canadian artist is creating porn for the blind by turning nude photos into raised images. Lisa of Toronto takes the pictures herself, then uses materials like clay, metal, cardboard to make a relief that's put into a machine that spits out formed plastic pages. An individual image takes up to 50 hours to make, and in turn, every book page is made by hand. 60 copies of this book have been made and have been sold online. Murphy states that this book provides access to something that only some people now have access to by blurring the lines of senses.

http://www.nydailynews.com/lifestyle/2010/04/13/2010-04-13_new_porn_magazine_for_the_blind_features_raised_pictures_of_nude_women.html#ixzz0loexjcRy

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Prostitution

South Africa - 'No prostitutes on the menu'

Cape Town has warned soccer fans to stay away from illegal brothels and not to expect an array of sex workers and child prostitutes on the streets during the World Cup. "People must not expect to find prostitutes on the menu when they come to Cape Town," JP Smith, the city's safety and security mayoral committee member, said yesterday. With just nine weeks to the tournament kick-off, the city's vice squad is closing in on illegal brothels and prostitution rings. Smith said there was a comprehensive policing strategy in place for the World Cup, which included clearing the streets of prostitutes and closing all illegal brothels. He said the number of child prostitution cases was increasing in the lead up to the soccer showpiece, and that most of the prostitutes caught roaming the streets were immigrants. Smith warned fans to stay away from brothels to prevent getting hurt or robbed. Neil Arendse of the city's vice squad said the unit would be monitoring the prostitution hotspots over the next few weeks.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20100409123243445C262799

South Africa - Red 'fright district' of SA

Men risk more than a sexual disease when they indulge their sexual desires along this notorious prostitution hotspot. Police have warned people to steer clear of the road in Philadelphia, Western Cape saying you never know what's lurking in the bushes waiting to pounce. Police say the robbers' lie in wait in the bushes close to where prostitutes have sex with clients in their cars. And he believes many of the prostitutes are working closely with the criminals. "While the men are having sex with the prostitutes, the robbers smash their windows and rob them of their valuables." He adds that there were also instances where some of the men were stabbed and injured. But there are reports of the women themselves robbing their clients, who hail from up market areas such as Table View, Milnerton and Melkbosstrand. "Last week, provincial traffic officers called us to a scene where an elderly man had been robbed by a prostitute." "When we got to the scene, the prostitute, who is known as Poppie, explained that she took the man's cell phone because he refused to pay her." He adds that although the woman was arrested, the man refused to lay a charge.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=iol1271755930850D163

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Stem Cells

Canada - Study: Stem cells help heart regeneration after surgery

Doctors from the Research Centre of the University of Montreal Hospital Centre and the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital performed a coronary artery bypass on a man with a failing heart by adding stem cells purified from his bone marrow to treat ischemic heart disease. The first patient to have his heart injected with his own stem cells while having open-heart bypass surgery, the heart is already pumping blood better than it was before the surgery. It has been shown over the last decade, that stem cells can repair and regenerate heart muscle cells. Researchers need

to expand their work to include more clinical trials and more patients, to ensure that the procedure is safe and effective because stem cells have the ability to turn into every single specialized cell that make up the human body.

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/health/Stem+cells+help+heart+regeneration+after+surgery+Study/2905302/story.html>

UK - Stem Cells Cure Liver Disease

Adult stem cells extracted from bone marrow are proving highly flexible for use in many different areas of treatment, ranging anywhere from tissue repair to liver damage. It is not necessary for the full liver to be transplanted from one individual to another in order for treatment to be successful. About 40% of the original liver is transplanted into a patient. The liver's natural regeneration ability will cause it to regrow to the original size. Researchers are currently exploring treatment methods utilizing adult stem cells for the treatment of chronic liver disease and liver fibrosis. The stem cells being used in the treatments underway are being extracted from the patient's own bone marrow, effectively eliminating the risk of rejection from the patient as the cells will simply be modified cells native to the patient's body.

<http://www.chxa.com/a/stem-cells-liver-disease-2/>

USA - Study Confirms Location of Stem Cells near Cartilage Rich Regions in Bones

A team of researchers has pinpointed the location of bone generating stem cells in the spine, at the ends of shins and in other bones. The team has identified factors that control the stem cells growth. The research was conducted at the National Institutes of Health. Identifying the location of bone stem cells and some of the genetic triggers that control their growth is an important step forward. The current study is the first to identify the location of bone stem cells in the adult mouse skeleton. The bone tumors were also more extensive in the mice with the two inactivated genes compared with their counterparts having only a single inactivated gene. The tumors formed only at locations where bone is actively growing even in the adult mouse skeleton. This formation of new bone tissue could lead to new techniques for regenerating damaged or injured bone.

http://www.devicespace.com/news_story.aspx?NewsEntityId=178281

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Substance Abuse

USA - Louisiana House backs ban on synthetic marijuana

The Louisiana House backed a ban of the product that goes by names like "K2," "Voodoo," "FIYA" and "Spice." The mixture of herbs and spices is sprayed with a synthetic compound chemically similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, and it's commonly sold in head shops and convenience stores. The product is rolled up in joints or inhaled from pipes, just like marijuana and has similar effects. Approved 102-0 the measure by Rep. Ricky Templeton would prohibit the manufacture, sale or possession of the combination of herbs, spices and synthetic ingredients. Templeton's bill would carry a prison sentence of up to five years for anyone convicted of manufacturing, distributing or possessing with intent to manufacture or distribute the herb and synthetic mixture. Possession would carry a penalty of up to six months in jail. Other states are considering bans.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9F2TL480.htm>

Denmark - Strabismus a gift from smoking mothers to their babies

Strabismus, or "cross-eyes," is a collective term for about 30 different conditions in which the eyes are unable to line-up in the same direction when focusing on an image. Left uncorrected, strabismus may lead to irreversible vision loss, in addition to psychological and social consequences. Exposure in the womb to harmful substances may be one cause of strabismus. Torp-Pedersen said that minor disturbances to the developing brain could plausibly lead to strabismus. He and his team identified more than 1,300 cases of strabismus from the Danish National Birth Cohort. All of the children were born between 1996 and 2003. Their mothers were interviewed twice during pregnancy, as well as at 6 and 18 months after delivery. They found that

women who smoked during pregnancy were at a 26 percent greater risk of having a child with strabismus compared to mothers who had not smoked, after adjusting for other risk factors such as alcohol consumption and the mother's age. The effect increased to 43 and 35 percent, respectively, for those who smoked during the first two or all three trimesters. In their report in the American Journal of Epidemiology, the researchers also note that women smoking between five and nine cigarettes a day had a 38 percent greater risk of their baby developing strabismus compared to non-smoking mothers. Smoking 10 or more cigarettes a day was associated with a 90 percent greater risk. "We were able to show that each extra cigarette smoked per day during pregnancy exerted a 5 percent increase in strabismus risk, which is a new finding," Torp-Pedersen said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE63F4SM20100416>

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Surrogacy

No news today

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Traditional Healers

South Africa - Muti murderers are not Witches

In extreme circumstances, unethical traditional healers (nyangas, sangomas and witchdoctors) resort to using so-called muti made from human body parts, a practice widely eschewed by both ethical healers and actual witches. Despite accusations to the contrary, evidence shows that the muti murderers themselves are not witches, but are most often paid by unscrupulous so-called traditional healers to harvest human body parts and tissue for use in magic. Those found guilty in courts of law have not identified themselves as witches, but rather as traditional healers. Neither Pheph'sile Maseko (Traditional Healers Organization national co-ordinator) nor Dr. Mathole Motshekga (ANC Chief whip) are able to provide any evidence to link muti murders to the practice of witchcraft or to actual identified witches, because the alleged witches are not witches, but rogue traditional healers acting outside the boundary of approved traditional healing practices. Maseko and Motshekga are knowingly and deliberately using witches as scapegoats to deflect negative attention away from those who abuse traditional healing practices for their own criminal gain.

http://www.newstime.co.za/rs_articles.asp?catid=1624&recid=1624

UK - New guidance for homeopathy use

The draft guidance comes following a report on homeopathy published earlier this year by the House of Commons Science Committee. It reviewed the evidence base for homeopathy and concluded that it was "not an efficacious form of treatment." The draft guidance from the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland proposes that patients buying homeopathic products be "appropriately advised that there is no scientific or clinical evidence base for the efficacy of homeopathic products, beyond a placebo effect". Commenting on the draft guidance, Brendan Kerr from the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, said homeopathy was not a risk free form of alternative health treatment. "There are real dangers that a patient using homeopathic products may be failing to seek appropriate diagnosis of a more serious underlying condition," he said. "Therefore, in our role of protecting patient safety in pharmacy, it is appropriate and necessary that formal professional guidance be issued to pharmacists on this matter."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8640582.stm

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