



Lifealerts 3 November 2010

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Abortion

Europe - Victory on Conscientious Objection at Council of Europe

An attack against the right of conscientious objection in medical care has been totally defeated in the Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) voted on a report, the original text of which recommended a crack-down on medical personnel who refuse to be complicit in the provision of abortion and other unethical procedures. Ronan Mullen, the Irish senator, and Luca Volonte of Italy, led the assembly in passing amendments which totally reversed the report, from a pro-abortion attack on conscientious objection to a defense of conscientious objection. Christine McCafferty, the report's British author and her fellow pro-abortion assembly-members were therefore forced to vote against their own report." The Assembly adopted the Resolution 1763 (2010) on "the right to conscientious objection in lawful medical care" which states that no person, hospital or institution shall be coerced, held liable or discriminated against in any manner because of a refusal to perform, accommodate, assist or submit to an abortion, the performance of a human miscarriage, or euthanasia, or any act which could cause the death of a human fetus or embryo, for any reason.

<http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/3132615182.html>

<http://spuc-director.blogspot.com/2010/10/breaking-news-pro-abortion-lobby-routed.html>

Italy - No Abortion as a Human Right in UN Summit Document

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe pro-life advocates declared a victory over the International Planned Parenthood Federation at the UN. Carmen Barroso, regional director of International Planned Parenthood Federation for the Western Hemisphere Region, recently complained to pro-abortion lobbyists that a UN Summit Outcome Document "neglects any reference to safe abortion. The Outcome Document was officially adopted by the General Assembly on the 22nd of September. The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) challenged the assertion by the abortion lobby that liberalization of abortion law improves maternal survival rates. They cited the experience of Poland, where legal restrictions were placed on abortion in 1993 and maternal mortality has dropped by 82 per cent in the last 20 years.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/oct/10101806.html>

USA - Candidate Blankets Capital with Graphic Abortion Campaign Ads

A pro-life Congressional candidate in the nation's capital has taken advantage of campaign advertisement law to show graphic abortion pictures on four local stations during daytime television. Missy Smith is airing advertisements in which she declares her opposition to the abortion holocaust while showing several images of the bodies of abortion victims. "I killed two of my babies by abortion. I was told it's not a baby; they lied to me, they exploited me. Then I learned the truth, and I suffered for years," says Smith in an ad that shows victims of saline abortions and other procedures. Obama, Pelosi, Reid, Norton, they all support the murder of babies and the abuse of women by abortion. It's time to make child-killing illegal again. In a second ad, Smith describes development of the baby in the early weeks of gestation, and condemns her opponent's support for their legal destruction, "This is murder," she states.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/oct/10102003.html>

USA - Nebraska Fetal Pain Law Goes Into Effect – Other States May Follow Suit

A landmark law (LB 1103) banning abortion after 20 weeks gestation, on the basis that an unborn child feels pain at that age, went into effect in Nebraska recently. "This is a historic and

celebratory moment... it being the first time in history that a law recognizing foetal pain has been enacted," said Tony Perkins, President of the Family Research Council. "This new law represents the next wave of momentum for the pro-life movement and is a major step toward a post-Roe future. Kanwaljeet Anand, a pioneer in the study of fetal pain and now a professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, testified in 2004 on the federal partial birth abortion ban that after 20 weeks gestation, an unborn child would experience "severe and excruciating pain" from an abortion. Fetal pain may even be more acute than it would be for older human beings, as some research indicates their immature nervous systems have not developed coping mechanisms that help the body better endure pain.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/oct/10101813.html>

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Alternative Medicine

Acupuncture

UK - Dozens killed by incorrectly placed acupuncture needles

Edzard Ernst, professor of complementary medicine at the Peninsula Medical School in Exeter, has called for a review of all acupuncture practitioners, after a survey revealed punctured hearts and lungs among causes of death over the past 45 years. A review of patients who died soon after acupuncture found a history of punctured hearts and lungs, damaged arteries and livers, nerve problems, shock, infection and hemorrhaging, largely caused by practitioners placing their needles incorrectly or failing to sterilize their equipment. The most common cause of death was a condition called pneumothorax, where air finds its way between the membranes that separate the lungs from the chest wall and causes the lungs to collapse.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/oct/18/dozens-killed-acupuncture-needles>

Homeopathy

Australia - Homeopathic teething tablets banned in US still on sale here

Homeopathic teething tablets containing deadly nightshade have been withdrawn from sale overseas but are still available to Australian parents. The US Food and Drug Administration warned that Hyland's Teething Tablets pose a risk to children because of "inconsistent" amounts of belladonna, or deadly nightshade. Belladonna is an extremely toxic plant, but one with a long history of use in traditional medicine and particularly in homeopathy. The FDA said they had received reports of "serious adverse events in children ... consistent with belladonna toxicity". The Australian regulatory body, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, is investigating. A tablet manufacturer, the Standard Homeopathic Company, has voluntarily recalled the tablet, while highlighting that "a conclusive link (to adverse events) has not been determined". A TGA spokeswoman said the tablets used to be listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods but no longer are, so the TGA cannot guarantee their safety.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/homeopathic-teething-tablets-banned-in-us-still-on-sale-here/story-e6frea8c-1225943919207>

Traditional Healing

South Africa - Plea to include traditional medicine in health plan

South African Indigenous Healthcare Research Chairperson Nceba Gqaleni told a conference that a health plan should inculcate cultural values in support of efforts to prevent HIV and reduce the impact of Aids nationally. Gqaleni said more research needed to be done around traditional medicines and their contribution to helping those who do not qualify for treatment at private health institutions. "The biggest issue is that the Health Department does not provide funding for any medical research in the provinces but the Department of Science and Technology has been the major source of research funding in South Africa," Gqaleni said. "We need to contextualize this and play a competitive role in prevention, treatment care and support, researching, monitoring

and surveillance, advocacy, investment, and developing new strategies and solutions with no short cuts.

<http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2010/10/28/plea-to-include-traditional-medicine-in-health-plan>

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Cloning

No news today

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Euthanasia

South Africa - South African Professor arrested for mom's mercy killing

A South Africa-based professor has been arrested for feeding his cancer-stricken mother a lethal dose of morphine in New Zealand.

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/article698431.ece/SA-prof-arrested-for-moms-mercy-killing>

Switzerland - Let the partners of terminally ill people commit suicide too

The founder of controversial Swiss clinic Dignitas has said a person whose terminally ill partner commits suicide should also be given help to die – even if they are perfectly healthy. Ludwig Minelli wants the deadly drug that is prescribed to his clients for suicide to be made available to the partners of those suffering from dementia. In such cases the partners are often a similar age and one does not want to remain without the other. Zurich public prosecutor Andreas Brunner rejected Mr Minelli's proposal to widen the legislation. It is not the first time Minelli has argued that healthy people should be given the legal right to suicide. He said that he believed assisted suicide should be available 'on demand'.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1321547/Suicide-clinic-Dignitas-calls-drugs-available-heartbroken-relatives.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

UK - I refused to help my father die

"Put me out of my misery." The words were my father's. There he laid, his body riddled with septicemia, suffering horribly in a hospital ward, as the rude, rough nurses were too busy with paperwork to relieve his pain. I couldn't believe this was my father, the man who had devoted his life to keeping his son Lorenzo alive. The story of how he and my stepmother had struggled 24/7 so that Lorenzo, robbed of his faculties by adrenoleukodystrophy, should live without pain or indignity, had been so remarkable that Hollywood made a movie about it, Lorenzo's Oil."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/8070180/I-refused-to-help-my-father-die.html>

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Gambling

No news today

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HIV/AIDS & STIs

USA - 'Groundbreaking' AIDS gel could change the face of the HIV epidemic

Groups developing a gel to protect women from the AIDS virus say they are moving ahead to develop the product that was hailed as "groundbreaking" after a study on its effectiveness was released in July. The gel, containing the AIDS drug Tenofovir, reduced HIV infections in women by 39 percent over two and a half years in a trial in South Africa that was called "groundbreaking" by the World Health Organisation. The FDA would require more information on whether the gel

works and is safe, but will help speed up the process, said Dr. Henry Gabelnick, executive director of CONRAD, one of the groups developing the gel. The need for such a gel is compelling -- most infections with the AIDS virus are in Africa and most new cases are among women infected during sex with men. A gel, cream or drug-releasing ring called a microbicide could help protect against HIV while allowing a woman to get pregnant, and, if necessary, she could use the product without letting her partner know.

http://www.nydailynews.com/lifestyle/health/2010/10/27/2010-10-27_will_groundbreaking_aids_gel_change_the_face_of_the_hiv_epidemic_.html

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Homosexuality

No news today

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In Vitro Fertilization

Canada - Canadian journalist fights for abolition of donor anonymity

A Canadian journalist is fighting a legal battle to find out who her sperm donor father is. Olivia Pratten, 28, and her mother want to examine the records of IVF doctor Gerald Korn, although the retired doctor says that they were destroyed in the 1990s. Ultimately Ms Pratten's goal is to end a regime of donor anonymity and to make it possible for IVF children to contact their biological fathers. Ms Pratten argues that IVF should be treated like adoption. Ms Pratten has been campaigning for years for the abolition of donor anonymity. She says on her website, "As the debate rages about donor anonymity, research has shown that the majority of people conceived this way don't even know about it. My own parents were counseled to not tell me. So before forming an opinion about this, I always ask people to put themselves in my shoes: if you found out tomorrow that your dad wasn't your biological father, could you honestly say that you would be satisfied never knowing who he was? And furthermore, would you tolerate being told you had no right to find out?"

http://www.bioedge.org/index.php/bioethics/bioethics_article/9242/

USA - Boy born from embryo frozen 20 years ago

An American woman has given birth to a boy who was created in an IVF clinic 20 years ago. This is the oldest-ever birth from a frozen embryo. The couple who created the embryo in 1990 offered it for donation after completing their own family. A 42-year-old woman has finally given birth to the child. The records keep tumbling in IVF. The oldest ever birth from frozen sperm is 22 years. The news of this new record prompted journalists to recall that in 2007 a mother froze some of her own eggs for her seven-year-old daughter who was likely to be infertile because of a medical condition. If the girl were to use the eggs she would effectively be the mother of her own half-brother or sister.

http://www.bioedge.org/index.php/bioethics/bioethics_article/9240/

Germany - Scientists Admit IVF Has High Rate of Abnormalities

Scientists announcing their success at achieving a new genetic defect-screening technique, have at the same time admitted, that many of the two-thirds of IVF embryos that fail to survive do so because of genetic abnormalities.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/mar/1003>

USA - New Study Confirms Overwhelming Death Rate of IVF Human Embryos

A report by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) on a study of IVF "efficiency", states that just 7.5 percent of all artificially fertilized embryos will go on to become live-born children. Researchers reviewed all the in vitro fertilization cycles conducted at Shady Grove between 2004 and 2008. In 14,324 IVF cycles, clinicians retrieved 192,991 eggs. Initially, 110,939 of the eggs were successfully fertilized. However, only 44,282 continued to develop into

viable embryos. Usual IVF practice is to implant just one or two living embryos into the womb per IVF cycle, with the others being frozen. In reality the frozen human embryos are more likely to be used in research or abandoned, rather than be allowed to continue growing in their mother's womb. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the incidence of twins has jumped 65 percent in the past two decades. A record 138,961 twin births - 32.2 per 1,000 live births - were recorded in 2007. In addition, there were 5,968 triplet births, 369 quadruplets and 91 quintuplets or higher. However, most multiple pregnancies resulting from IVF are "selectively reduced" by abortion.

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/oct/10102604.html>

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Medical Ethics

USA - Protecting the public from misleading tests

Concern is growing about companies over-selling the results of genetic tests. This week's issue of The Lancet lists a number of serious concerns highlighted by a report from the US General Accounting Office. The GAO sent genetic material from fictitious consumers to several direct-to-consumer genetic testing companies and analyzed the results. They were damning: the test results were "misleading and of little or no practical use". More recently the London-based Nuffield Council on Bioethics questioned whether it was appropriate to frame "a view of health as a kind of consumption good, and hence of health products and services as commodities." The Council also claimed that the tests were being used "not merely to respond to consumer demand, but also to reshape such demand to create and sustain a market". Governments are also worried. Earlier this year, Germany passed a law requiring "predictive genetic examinations to be conducted or commissioned only by doctors who specialize in human genetics". The Lancet summarized some of the objections: Tests for trivial traits like male pattern baldness are being packaged together with tests for serious ailments like Alzheimer's disease. And some companies were willing to do surreptitious testing – without informed consent – which is unethical and even illegal. But the debate over genetic testing will not go away in an era of personalized medicine. Consumers have become convinced that the future of their health can be read in their genes.

<http://www.bioedge.org/>

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Organ Trafficking

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Pedophilia

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Pornography

South Africa - gets first all-black porn film

South Africa has produced the first all-black pornographic film, of which the producer said they intend to help promote safe sex and combat HIV. Mapona which means naked in Sesotho was made in response to demand from the 30,000 members of an amateur porn site. With South Africa burdened by the world's biggest HIV caseload, killing nearly 1,000 people a day, Morena said he was conscious of the need to promote responsible behavior. Surveys show that many South Africans are opposed to pornography and believe it should be restricted. A recent proposal for an adult channel on a digital TV channel provoked fierce opposition and earlier this year the

deputy home affairs minister, Malusi Gigaba, investigated a ban on pornography on the web and mobile phones.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/14/south-africa-black-porn-mapona>

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Prostitution & Trafficking

China - Women's rights groups balk at decriminalizing prostitution

Women's rights groups came together to denounce the government's plan to decriminalize prostitution and allow sex workers to set up small businesses, challenging the administration's stance. At a press conference centered on the theme of "Coalition against Sexual Exploitation," members of The Garden of Hope Foundation and the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation called for Executive Premier Yuan Wu to withdraw plans to completely decriminalize the sex trade by the end of this year. Yuan Wu has responded to the claims by clarifying that discussions on the topic are currently in the public hearing stage and have not yet become legislative policies. All the women's rights group who attended the conference were firmly against the legalization of the sex trade. Describing themselves as strong advocates in reducing the sex industry, they said they were for the punishment of clients, who on top of being penalized should contribute "social monetary donations" to foundations for disadvantaged and sexually abused women.

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20101017-242690.html>

Namibia - Women's Action Development adamant against legalizing prostitution

Women's Action Development Executive Director, Veronica De Klerk, indicated that she is firmly against the legalization of prostitution in Namibia. At the WAD 2010 graduation of members of the Namibian Police Force, she said the thoughtless idea proposed to the youth as a possible solution to poverty and unemployment was very dangerous and destructive. De Klerk also appealed to the president and law makers to come to the nation's rescue and ensure that legalization of prostitution is rejected. De Klerk questioned whether drunken driving, driving without licenses, drug and diamond smuggling and unlicensed shebeens should be legalised just because it happens in society. She said her organisation realised that solutions to poverty and unemployment are challenging, but to consider legalizing prostitution amounts to causing more damage to new generations, and is a blow to the work of NGOs, churches and schools who are working tirelessly to uphold Christian principles, norms and values

http://www.informante.web.na/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7300&Itemid=1

United Arab Emirates - Paper lauds steps to combat human trafficking

It is heartening that the UAE authorities take steps to combat the horror of human trafficking and the exploitation of women and children that continues to occur even in this century, commented an UAE daily. It is fitting that the UAE has joined the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking and the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs is certain to take this role very seriously. The blueprint seeks not only to fight the crime but also to ensure there is a proactive and ready safety net for the victims and their rehabilitation. Shelter homes are of the essence and it is part of cultural awareness, as well as a strong aversion to such practices that has given the UAE this sense of responsibility. That the Emirates is at the forefront of the battle can be seen in the response to the recent story of a young lad being chained in his own home and the rescue that was performed to get him out of the domestic abuse and into a protection program.

<http://www.wam.org.ae/servlet/Satellite?c=WamLocEnews&cid=1285739250730&p=1135099400124&pagename=WAM%2FWamLocEnews%2FW-T-LEN-FullNews>

Canada - Alberta joins fight to get erotic ads removed

A week after the province backed away from a national push to have Craigslist ban ads for adult erotic services over human trafficking concerns, Alberta's justice minister and solicitor general issued a letter to the website demanding their removal. The letter described the ads as a "thinly veiled cover for human trafficking." "By allowing these ads to remain, Craigslist is indirectly supporting the exploitation of the vulnerable, which are all-too-often women and children." The

letter is a reversal from Oberle's comments on Oct. 15, following a national justice and public safety ministers meeting where the issue was widely discussed. A similar push by 17 attorney generals in the United States resulted in the website pulling the sex ads in that country.

<http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/canadaworld/article/1277179>

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Stem Cells

USA - Adult Stem Cells That Do Not Age

Biomedical researchers at the University at Buffalo State University of New York have engineered adult stem cells that scientists can grow continuously in culture, a discovery that could speed development of cost-effective treatments for diseases including heart disease, diabetes, immune disorders and neurodegenerative diseases. Scientists created the new cell lines by genetically altering mesenchymal stem cells, which are found in bone marrow and can differentiate into cell types including bone, cartilage, muscle and fat. The researchers say the breakthrough overcomes a frustrating barrier to progress in the field of regenerative medicine: The difficulty of growing adult stem cells for clinical applications. Because mesenchymal stem cells have a limited life span in laboratory cultures, scientists and doctors who use the cells in research and treatments must continuously obtain fresh samples from bone marrow donors, a process both expensive and time-consuming. Techung Lee, professor of biochemistry and biomedical engineering in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, who led the project said, "the cells we have engineered grow continuously in the laboratory, which brings down the price of treatments." The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health and New York State Stem Cell Science.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/10/101001144205.htm>

USA - Functional nerve cells from adult skin cells

Scientists at the University of Connecticut Health Centre have successfully converted adult skin cells of four humans into region-specific forebrain, midbrain, and spinal cord neurons (nerve cells), with functions. The research is a key step toward realizing the cells' potential to treat various neurodegenerative diseases. The UConn team, led by Dr. Ren-He Xu, director of the Health Center's Stem Cell Core facility, and Dr. Xuejun Li, a neural scientist in the Neuroscience Department, described how they used cell reprogramming protocols to first transform the adult tissue into "induced pluripotent stem cells", then exposed these reprogrammed human cells to a series of chemical mixtures to drive them into becoming specialized neuronal cells. Their study was published in the journal Public Library of Science. The ability to take easily obtainable skin cells and potentially make any tissues in the body eliminates the need to destroy human embryos. The UConn research is the first to focus on the ability of human iPSC to create functional neurons in region-specific areas of both the brain and spinal cord. A key step for using stem cells as therapy in neurological diseases, says Xu, must be developing the ability to direct their differentiation into neural lineages and then to specific neuronal types that are affected by different diseases such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease.

<http://www.physorg.com/news/2010-10-functional-nerve-cells-adult-skin.html>

Denmark - New research could end organ donation

Danish researchers will potentially be able to make organ donating superfluous in the future, following their development of new technology using stem cells. Researchers at Aarhus University have developed an implant that makes it possible to develop an organ in the body by using the patient's own stem cells. Morten Andersen of Aarhus University said researchers tested the implant on lab mice and after a two-week period, both bones and fat like tissue from the same implant began growing, making the Danish researchers the first ever to successfully get stem cells to develop in two different directions at the same time. This is necessary, as human organs are always made of several different types of cell and tissue types. The research project is collaboration between Aarhus University and Odense University Hospital.

<http://www.cphpost.dk/news/scitech/92-technology/50116-new-research-could-end-organ-donation.html>

USA - Hype over Stem Cell Science

For the first time, doctors have injected a patient with human embryonic stem cells. The patient is partially paralyzed and the cells were converted to special nerve cells. The theory is that some will form a restorative coating around the damage. So what to make of the experiment? "I don't understand [having] human trials because the animal studies aren't very convincing," David Bennett, a University of Alberta neuroscientist renowned for his experimentation with spinal-cord injuries said. For example, Geron Corporation says it will only treat patients injured in the preceding two weeks. Yet that's when injured spinal cords are spontaneously generating new cells in an effort to heal. To only use patients who have just been injured "will make results really difficult to interpret," said Bennett. But even if this experiment does show some promise, top ESC researchers admit treatments and cures using ESCs are perhaps three to five decades away. Meanwhile, scientists using widely overlooked adult stem cells (ASCs) have already made progress treating human paralysis. Wayne State University biologist Jean Peduzzi-Nelson, said "a number of patients receiving treatment [with ACS] have gone from no movement and no sensation in their legs to some movement and some sensation.

<http://www.aolnews.com/opinion/article/opinion-geron-corp-stem-cell-news-is-more-hype-than-science/19673060>

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Substance Abuse

UK - Californian Poll reveals opposition to Proposition 19

Proposition 19, also known as the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010 is now opposed by California voters, by 49% to 44%, according to the latest poll from the Public Policy Institute of California. The latest poll shows that men are evenly split and women oppose the initiative 50% to 41%. Independent voters oppose it, 49% to 40%. Democrat support in September dropped 7 percentage points to 53% in the latest poll. Republicans reject it by 66%, an increase of 4 percentage points. The earlier poll showed overwhelming support among likely voters between ages 18 and 34. Support in that age bracket dropped from 70% to 59% this month. Support also slipped among voters 35 and older. In September, 56% of likely voters in Los Angeles County supported the measure. This month, that percentage slipped to 41. The Public Policy Institute of California surveyed 1,067 likely voters from October 10-17. Proposition 19 will be on the November 2, 2010 California state wide ballot.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-1021-prop-poll-20101021,0,1066812.story>

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Surrogacy

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