Introduction

There abound antagonisms in the health care practice and the religious beliefs of people from different societies. When health care practices cross the line of their beliefs, the people will rise to the occasion and oppose the practices. Religion and science are two opposing doctrines. What scientists believe sometimes collide with what different religious contexts uphold. An example where there has been a bond of contention between Christians and science view is the legalization of abortion.

Christians are of the argument that abortion is killing, no matter what circumstances it is carried out in. Scientists, on the other hand, argue that some health conditions negate abortion. Many grey areas exist between science and Christianity. There are no clear lines separating right from wrong in most cases. Debates still abound on the subject of abortion. The time when life starts in the womb is different for Christians and scientists; Christians believe that life begins immediately the male and female gametes meet in the fallopian tube, and that any process that may interfere with the development process when fertilization has occurred will amount to killing. Therefore, Christians will take every opportunity to oppose abortion.

The antagonisms that exist between Christianity and science affect the healing process of individuals; some of the traditional beliefs are even fatal. For example, the case analyzed in this paper may be fatal to the woman if the Christian dogma is upheld to the letter. Sometimes religious beliefs bring a bond of contention to medical practice, it is, therefore, imperative for physicians to know how to handle such beliefs to make their practice more effective, Borm (2005).

Christian Science beliefs related to birth

Christians uphold birth with very high sanctity. They believe that birth is a token from God, and that no human being should ever interfere with the birth process. They believe birth is a means God uses to create new persons today, and that the creation process should solely be left to
God. Any human intervention that may prevent birth from occurring is considered as contravening and compromising God's original plan of life. Christians believe that life begins immediately after conception, when the sperm meets the ova at the oviduct.

Procreation starts immediately, no one except God should interrupt the development process once it has started. Any attempt to stop the cells from development is considered as abortion, which is killing in other words. In the book of Genesis in the bible, Christians believe that God issued the commandments that all Christians should adhere to, in His ordinances to Moses. One of the commandments is that they should not kill; abortion is viewed as a way of killing by Christians, and as such, it is unacceptable under all means. Once life starts in the uterus, it should continue until birth, as that God’s plan. Birth is highly esteemed by Christians as it is an action instigated by God Himself. Therefore, the religious belief of the couple will hinder them from taking the medical procedures of doing away with the ectopic pregnancy, they view it as killing.

**Christian Science belief on death**

Death is viewed by Christians as an event solely controlled by the supernatural. God is the giver and taker of life. No human intervention should be undertaken to cause an end to life, this will be like taking the role of God, which as humans is highly forbidden. Christians believe that human beings have a duty from God to uphold, respect and protect the God given life. God should be the one who should determine when life should end, and not human beings. In as far as, God has given human beings to discover and practice health procedures, the practices should be limited to upholding life, whenever a medical procedure contravenes life, it is seen by Christians as negating the duties of the supernatural God, and hence, according to the Christian faith it is forbidden.

In the case of the couple, the medical procedure of ending the ectopic pregnancy will be taken by Christians as a way of ending the life of the to-be-born child and thus the couples will be opposed to it. This will interfere with the doctors’ role and practice of ending the suffering of the wife. The Christian faith, many a times, stands in between the provision of medical services by physicians and patients. This causes a disincentive to practice, in the case of the couple, the doctors have the ability and expertise to end the pain being experienced by the to-be mum, but they are hindered from the provision of the service by the Christian beliefs of the couples.

**Christian Science beliefs on illness and disease**
Christians believe that Satan is the cause of illness and disease, and God being more powerful than the devil, He will always cure diseases from human beings. They uphold the faith that God is the healer of human disease, they believe that doctors treat, but it is God who cures, and that everything that happens is planned by God. Whenever God does not intervene in some cases of sicknesses, it may be His plan to take the life of the given individual.

In the case of the couple, the two may take the ectopic pregnancy to end the life of the wife, because they believe the child to be born would be innocent, God can not plan to end the life of the new born, and so humans should not take any procedures that may end the new life. God’s actions will always be right. The couple may argue against the doctors procedures, for example, on the grounds that God has His plan and will always come to pass. For example, they may believe that a miracle could happen which will bring everything in its course. These beliefs in the supernatural will harbor the treatment and cure of the wife. When intervention through a medical procedure is not taken, then the mother is doomed to die.

Christian Science beliefs relating to healing practices

Christians beliefs that God is the overseer of healing of diseases, they actually belief that God is the healer, and that humans can only treat; the Christian couple may, therefore, belief that whatever medical interventions the doctor takes, God will be the final determinant of whether the wife will be able to recover or not. They may belief that if they give into practices that are abhorrent to God, He may even punish them more. If God has planned for the wife to deliver and live well, they belief that nothing can hinder that, however, if He has planned that the wife must die, as well there is nothing which can stop that. With these religious dogmas of Christians, the life of the wife will be placed a greater risk.

If the wife should recover from the ectopic pregnancy, it will be imperative for the couple to shed off the beliefs that the uphold on healing practices, they should understand that same God who issued ordinances that humans should not kill, is the same God who has given human beings the logical reasoning that they posses. They should understand two lives are at stake here, and that it was better to save one and lose one compared to losing both.

The views of the medical providers are based on logical thinking and valid deduction from the situation and not on religious dogmas, prejudices or stereotypes. Complications during
pregnancy are common phenomena during, and there are always corrective medical procedures that can be implemented to correct the conditions, Barbour (2000). After hearing the perceptions of the couple, the medical team will most likely embark on giving advice to the couple, to awaken them on the high importance of the suggested medical procedure at that particular time. They will assist the couples to drop their preconceptions about the necessary procedure and eventually cause them to consent to it.

The cause of pain and suffering during the ectopic pregnancy

The pain in the ectopic pregnancy is caused by the implantation of the developing group of cells in the wrong position, Saunders & Valerie et al. (1996). Usually after fertilization, the developing cells should be implanted in the uterus where there is adequate space for development of the fetus. The fallopian tube is too narrow and cannot contain the size of the zygote without straining. The pain is a result of the pressure exerted by the developing cells on the wall muscles of the fallopian tube. To end the pain and suffering, pain relievers are inadequate, the suggested surgical procure will be necessary in relieving the wife from suffering. If the fetus is allowed to develop in the fallopian tube, the pain will increase with the trimesters of the pregnancy, the strain experienced by the oviduct muscles in supporting the oversize zygote, for it may even result in bursting of the tube. There is no way that the religious beliefs can help take away the pain, only the doctor’s recommendations will help the couple save the situation.

The life of the mother and that of the child

Because the zygote is not yet fully developed to survive the surgical procedure, its life will certainly be terminated by the surgery. Logically, it is worth negating the life of the underdeveloped zygote to save the life of the because, allowing the wrongly positioned cells to continue developing may eventually result into loss of both the life of the mother and her expected baby. The medical procedure should not therefore be seen as act taken to end the life of the baby, but should be seen as an attempt to save the life of the mother; bearing that both lives are at stake. Under such a situation it is worthy to sacrifice the life of the developing fetus to save that of the mother.
The health care provider’s perception of time in the situation

The physician’s perception of time in this situation is that, it is the factor that stands to determine the life of the mother. He sees the life of the mother as being in danger, if the procedure is not implemented within an hour time frame, if the procedure is delayed, it might result into more complications after it has been carried out.

Time is also the factor which will determine the life of the mother in the near future. Development of the fetus in the wrong positioning will be taken as a foreign body in the mother’s systems. The body tissues will soon give in to the pressure exerted by the developing cells. Some tissues such as blood vessels may burst, and this warrants immediate death. Hence the suggested procedures should be implemented within the time frame stipulated by the physicians, failure to which fatalities may ensue.

The medical model

The medical model out rules the religious dogmas, as the physician should concentrate on the object of the pain, which is the developing fetus; it therefore would conclude an immediate procedure to remove the developing cells which is the factor behind the pain being experienced by the wife. This model should not be seen as devaluing the life of the developing child, relativity is what comes into play here. The life of the mother is more important relative to that of the baby in such a situation, because if the medical procedure is not applied, certainly, it is impractical save the child and the mother, and, therefore, the doctors will forgo the child’s life. Based on the current situation, this will be the best course of action, McGrath (2009).

According to what we have learnt in this class, it is imperative for the nursing practice to integrate the culture of the people they serve into the practice to make it more effective. The nursing staff, in this case would therefore result into giving a religious based advice to the couple, to enable them see the light in the procedure suggested by the doctors. For example, they may advice the couple that God does not will human beings to suffer, and that God will not be happy seeing the suffering of the wife, while He knows that He has given the physicians the brains to evade the pain.
The impact of not delivering culturally sensitive medical practice to patients is that patients may develop a negative attitude towards the medical practice that does not recognize their culture. However, if the medical practitioners make the practice more culturally affiliate, it will be positively be received by the patients, those who have negative attitudes towards the procedures may end up dropping them, Carey (2000).

Conclusion

Religious beliefs may become a stumbling block for medical practitioners. It is the physicians’ and nurses’ duty to establish how religious beliefs could impact on their practice and consequently come up with ways of handling such circumstances. The nursing and medical practice should integrate the way of life of the people to make it more acceptable to them, as it is made for the people.

References


