

ARTICLE/BOOK REVIEWS

Research is needed to evaluate analgesia requirements for women undergoing surgical abortion under local anaesthesia and the effect on acceptability. In addition, there is a need to assess the cost implications of this approach in comparison to other methods.

A randomised controlled trial conducted in Aberdeen compared sublingual to vaginal administration of misoprostol 400 µg in the context of cervical priming prior to surgical abortion and showed similar efficacy and good patient acceptability.¹⁵ The sublingual route was used in this study to allow self-administration at home prior to hospital admission, thus minimising the duration of time needed to be in hospital and to allow an optimal priming interval prior to surgery.

Conclusions

This study suggests that surgical abortion using MVA under local anaesthesia is effective and acceptable to women. These findings now need to be assessed in the context of a randomised trial.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Louise Craigie and Morag McBain from the Pregnancy Advisory Service and the staff in Day Surgery Theatre, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary for their contribution to this study.

Statements on funding and competing interests

Funding. None identified.

Competing interests. None identified.

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Book Reviews

The Reproduction Revolution: A Christian Appraisal of Sexuality, Reproductive Technologies and the Family. JF Kilner, PC Cunningham and WD Hager (eds). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. ISBN: 0 8028 4715 3. Price: £18.00. Pages 282 (paperback)

I became interested in this book after hearing about the controversy surrounding one of its editors: W. David Hager was nominated by President Bush to chair the US Food and Drug Administration's panel on reproductive health care, sparking a national outcry from liberals.

The Reproduction Revolution comprises chapters from 31 contributors and three editors, mostly working in reproductive health or education and all coming from a conservative Christian perspective. They discuss assisted reproduction at length, but also explore reproductive cloning, surrogacy, contraception, abortion, Viagra® and sexual mores in US society. A fascinating picture emerges of a country whose wealth and enthusiasm for technological advance combine with a lack of consistent regulation from state to state to make most things possible. A myriad of bizarre and disturbing legal cases illustrate the wisdom that not everything that *can* be done *should* be done. The authors respond with the repeated assertion that sex and reproduction were ordained as gifts from God for exclusive use within heterosexual marriage.

This volume is valuable as a heartfelt exploration of the ramifications of reproductive technology. There is helpful discussion of different ethical principles, which might help

determine exactly when life begins and what then might reasonably be done with unused frozen embryos generated by *in vitro* fertilisation programmes. Chapters on the potential problems of reproductive cloning are also interesting.

In their introduction, the editors suggest that "...a Christian perspective has much to offer to a broad audience in terms of wise counsel". This volume certainly offers a timely summary of all that can go awry in modern human sexuality and reproduction; however, solutions direct from the Bible will probably not be well received, at least in the UK. The broader message is that we must think carefully about the ramifications of new medical technology, apply some kind of value system, and legislate wisely for its healthy use.

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The Opposite of Chocolate. J Bertagna. London, UK: Young Picador, 2003. ISBN: 0 330 39746 X. Price: £4.99. Pages: 183 (paperback)

Fourteen-year-old Sapphire is devastated to find she is pregnant. Now she must face the shocked and conflicting reactions of her parents, sister and best friend. Along the way she will discover a lot about their attitudes to parenthood and their hopes for Sapphire's future. Ultimately though she must make her own decision, as the novel moves towards its devastating conclusion.

The Opposite of Chocolate is teenage fiction at its best, from acclaimed teenage author Julie Bertagna. It brings an intense reminder of how it felt to be fourteen. This novel was appreciated and avidly discussed by both the local teenage reading group and the family planning clinic

doctors' reading group. Buy this book if you have a teenage daughter. Read this book if you want to have a little more insight into the journey of the next monosyllabic pregnant teenager you see in your consulting room.

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Woman: The Haynes Owners Workshop Manual. I Banks (with S Hayman). Yeovil, UK: Haynes Publishing, 2004. ISBN: 1 84425 182 9. Price: £12.99. Pages: 152 (hardback)

The Haynes Workshop Manuals are known for their clear diagrammatic explanation of car and motorcycle repairs. As such, the traditional readership is male. Recently the manuals have diversified with practical guides for men's health, babies, sex and cancer. The latest manual in Haynes Family Manuals series is described as a 'practical step-by-step guide to women's health, for men' and offers a similar style of content to make the information accessible to the lay reader. The book is divided into chapters covering the major systems in the body. These are labelled as parts of a car, which makes it more difficult for me to understand, but then I am not the target audience. The content is comprehensive and very detailed. There are lots of useful contact addresses for a wide range of organisations. The book includes a lot of information that is pertinent to men's health as well. It would be a helpful book for lay readers – both male and female – as a reference guide and for general information.

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