

Book Review

Reproductive Health and Islamic Values: Ethical and Legal Insights.
By AbulFadlMohsin Ibrahim. The Islamic Medical Association of South Africa, 2011, pp. v+107. ISBN: 978-0-9802737-24.

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Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity, in all matters relating reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how to do so. The book under review is a nice piece of research based work dealing with the diverse issues related to the reproductive health. The reproductive health issues addressed in the book are in the form of case studies they include: sexually transmitted diseases/infections, HIV prevention, pregnancy, contraception, assisted reproductive technologies, termination of pregnancy and hymenoplasty. The book under review covers an assemblage of case studies on various topics which are relevant to decision making in areas of reproductive health

Abul Fadl Mohsin Ebrahim hails from Seychelles and is a South African citizen. He completed his bachelor's degree from Al-Azhar and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. He is currently a professor of Islamic Studies in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. His earlier works include *Abortion, Birth Control and Surrogate Motherhood-An Islamic Perspective* published in 1989 by American Publications, Indianapolis, USA; *Organ Transplantation, Euthanasia, cloning and Animal Experimentation- An Islamic View* published in 2001 the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, UK; and *An Introduction to Islamic Medical Jurisprudence* published in 2008 by Islamic Medical Association of South Africa, Durban, South Africa.

Consisting of seven topics and divided into seventeen case studies, besides an introduction by the author and forwarded by Bernard M. Dickens¹ the book considers and takes into account the burning issues related to the reproductive health. Topic one (Sexually Transmitted Infections, pp. 5-22) comprises of three case studies dealing with adolescent sex education, pre-marital STIs antibody testing and confidentiality of HIV positive patient. Topic two (HIV Prevention, pp. 23-28) consists of one case study CAPRISA 004 Trial of Tenofovir Gel. Topic three (Pregnancy, pp. 30-40) comprises of three case studies viz. Preterm delivery, Professional/Maternal conflict and Maternal /Fetal conflict. Topic four (Contraception, pp. 41-54) consists of three case studies like Young bride and secret access to contraception, sterilization without telling spouse and Conscientious objection of pharmacist and dispensing of contraceptives. Topic five (Assisted Reproduction, pp. 55-76) consists of three case studies viz. sex selection and prenatal diagnosis, transferring of wrong embryos and savior sibling. Topic six

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(Termination of Pregnancy, pp. 77-91) comprises of three case studies like abortion and rape-related pregnancies, defective fetus and conscientious objection and incomplete abortion. Topic seven (Reconstructive Surgery, pp. 92-95) include one case study that is hymenoplasty.

First of all the author introduces the case study so that a clear picture comes to the mind of the reader regarding the issue. After the introduction the author raises some questions related to the issue and then he makes a review of the study. The next part of the study is the ethical consideration in which the author takes into account the ethical reflection related to the persons involved in the issue like doctor, spouse and the family members. These ethical considerations include Respect for persons, *Beneficence*, *Nonmaleficence*- "Do no harm" and *Justice*. The third part of the study is the legal discourse in which the author cites some rulings from the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* in the context of each of the case studies and most importantly takes into consideration *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* which include Preservation of life and health, Gender factor and the lesser of two evils to resolve the problems that arise in each of the case studies and then the author provides his opinions in the conclusion. The book ends with a 5 pages long bibliography, table of statues, table of case, index of proper names and general index.

There are certain lapses in this book which need to be pointed out here. For example, some editorial works need to be carried out on pages 11 and 32 of the book. In addition, the binding of the book is very casual as the numbering of the pages goes like this,.....12, 17, 18, 15, 16, 13, 14, 19, 20, 25, 26, 23, 24, 21, 22, 27, In spite of these lapses, the book is a nice piece of research in this particular field and definitely will open doors for learning and debates. Furthermore, the book is useful for the students of Islam and Medical Sciences and will prove to be equally useful for the interdisciplinary study of related concepts. The book further substantiates the fact that Islamic Studies is a broad discipline that covers all aspects of human endeavor and encompasses other disciplines. Finally, the book is a good contribution to the discourse Islamic perspective on reproductive health and a book such as this one deserves attention from students and scholars engaged in research in this field.

¹ Bernard M. Dickens is Chairman of the Ethics Committee International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), Professor Emeritus Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine and Joint Centre for Bioethics, Co-Director, International Reproductive and Sexual Health Law Programme.