

A thirty year old unmarried woman, Teresa Stevens, came to Dr. Arnold Franklin, an obstetrician, requesting artificial insemination by donor. Dr. Franklin's general practice was to interview women twice to determine whether they are suitable candidates medically and psychologically. Ms. Stevens said that she was working part-time and intended to stay at her job once the baby was born. She also provided assurances from family and friends that they supported her desire to be a mother. Dr. Franklin decided to go ahead with the procedure, which was successful. Several months later the press reported that Ms. Stevens was receiving \$161 in monthly pregnancy welfare assistance. In addition she had recently learned that she was eligible for \$401 a month from Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and she intended to file for those benefits. Ms. Stevens admitted that she knew about the pregnancy benefits before she contacted Dr. Franklin.

Should Dr. Franklin have required Ms. Stevens to provide information to him about her financial condition as well as interview her to determine whether she was a medically and psychologically suitable candidate for artificial insemination by donor? If so, why?
If not, why not?

(From Hastings Center Report, Feb. 1983)

MODERATOR'S ANSWER: It would be wrong for Dr. Franklin to insist upon receiving financial information. In this case Ms. Stevens utilized benefits to which she was legally entitled. If Dr. Franklin objects to the laws which created those entitlements he should work to change them. It would be unfair of him to express his opposition to the laws by refusing his services to women like Ms. Stevens. For all Dr. Franklin knows other, more affluent, patients may benefit even more than Ms. Stevens from taking advantage of laws (e.g. "tax loopholes") in ways of which he disapproves, or ought to disapprove.

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