**Medical Termination of Pregnancy in Special Cases : Ethical Dilemma**

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**Abstract :**

A twenty-two week pregnant female who is a housewife had symptoms like severe headache, vomiting, weakness and tiredness. Initially she ignored these symptoms considering it to be part of pregnancy symptoms. But a week later she had an episode of imbalance leading to fall. She immediately consulted her gynaecologist who directed her to the Neurologist, after basic examination. She was diagnosed with grade three brain tumour which needed immediate surgery.

After consulting the family, urgent surgery was planned. During discussions with doctor about the pregnancy status, doctors advised medical termination of pregnancy is against law as it is beyond twenty weeks. Patient was operated with the necessary precautions with constant foetal monitoring, surgery went off well. Patient recovered well. The side effect was maternal hypertension leading to premature delivery by six months, low birth weight, brain injury leading to admission of neonate in neonatal intensive care unit. The child could survive but diagnosed with spastic cerebral palsy, wheelchair bound throughout his life. The main issues that emerge in this case are should medical termination of pregnancy beyond twenty weeks be considered in special cases? Should doctors be given the authority to take necessary action without waiting for the legal permissions? Should family priorities be considered?

**Detailed Case :**

It was summer vacation. A 29 year old female was doing the household chores when suddenly she started vomiting. She also had severe headache and stared feeling tired and weak. She attributed this to the fact that she was pregnant with her second child.

The female is a happily married housewife. She is a proud mother to a 7 year old girl. She is twenty-two weeks pregnant, and the couple is eagerly looking forward to welcome the second bundle of joy.

The ailing female thought that vomiting, fatigue and headache are very normal during pregnancy and moreover it was summer time, so she completely ignored it and continued the daily chores.

But a week later she had an episode of imbalance leading to fall. She immediately met her gynaecologist. The gynaecologist after the basic examination directed the patient to a well-known Neurologist. The female was diagnosed with grade three brain tumour. It took around two weeks post investigations for the Neurologist to reach the diagnosis. The patient had to go under the knife immediately. The surgery was planned in consultation with the family. The patient’s family had a detailed discussion with the doctors about the pregnancy status. The doctors were of the opinion that medical termination of pregnancy is against law as it is beyond twenty weeks.

The pregnant female was operated with constant foetal monitoring. Surgery went off well. Patient recovered well. However the side effect was maternal hypertension leading to premature delivery. She delivered a baby girl as early as in the sixth month of pregnancy with low birth weight and brain injury leading to admission of neonate in neonatal intensive care unit. The child could survive but diagnosed with spastic cerebral palsy, wheelchair bound throughout her life.

The family was shattered. They felt they should have insisted medical termination of pregnancy as a special case. The family wondered why doctors can’t be given the authority to take necessary action without waiting for the legal permissions. They indeed loved their new born but were feeling very sorry for the innocent child who was spastic and would be wheel chair bound throughout the life. They felt they had failed as parents for their new born.