



### **BRIEWE**

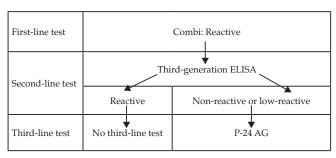


Fig. 1. New fourth-generation HIV test protocol.

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# Abortion – an elusive moral cut-off point?

To the Editor: The argument about some theoretical 'cut-off' point has an unrecognised objective: to deflect, allay or absolve Guilt in the aborting mother or the operator of the abortion. The Law also colludes with the immature behaviour of the population at large and does not encourage the development of adult responsibility in respect of contraception and family planning.

These arguments are based on 'moral' grounds, ignoring the higher issue of the spiritual self. To discount the Spirit is to discount humanity: you have a body, you have a mind ... yet you are a spirit. Morality has to do with *prevailing* societal values of right and wrong, and these are as changeable as the weather. The utilitarians' view¹ is flawed and makes apparent their ignorance of the realities of fetal life. Let us accept the premise that personhood entails an entity's ability to suffer and an interest in the continuance of its existence. However, I reject outright that the latter interest develops 'some time after birth'.

Contrary to conventional wisdom the fetus *does* think, *does* have emotions and certainly *displays survival behaviour*. The truth is that the fetus is *intensely* concerned with its survivability – not only from a physical perspective but still more powerfully at an emotional and spiritual level.<sup>2</sup> I have facilitated more than 1 000 such regressions, and a great many of the perceptions thus recalled were verified by the mothers of my patients. These events often begin with the mother's awareness of the pregnancy – usually confirmed around 6 - 8 weeks – and become magnified through the second and third trimesters. The weight of this evidence is based on many tens of thousands of such regressions, in South Africa and the USA. I no longer regard the fertilised ovum as a 'potential' person – it is a distinct entity imbued with a spiritual nature.

Separation-survivability theory operates from the perspective of *physical* survival but, with respect, ignores the great suffering experienced emotionally and spiritually by the fetus, and occasionally physically, from as early as the first trimester. It is here that the awareness of the threat to its survivability often begins. Without Love, a *de facto* condition in abortion, survivability is bleak indeed.

I will not sit idly by without comment. I emphatically vote for the Conservatives.

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- De Roubais JAM, Van Niekerk, AA. Separation-survivability the elusive cut-off point? S Afr Med J 2006; 96: 623-626.
- 2. Modlin CT. The psychodynamics of the prenatal experience. Serenity 2006; 4 (2):

**To the Editor:** The article by De Roubaix and Van Niekerk<sup>1</sup> is interesting and thought provoking.

As they try to define the moral cut-off point, they discuss different views on the time-old question – when does life begin? In my humble opinion, they left out one important theory: the pragmatic view.

Three clerics were talking about the beginning of life.

Said the first: When the baby is born, with the first breath the soul enters the body and the life begins.

The second cleric disagreed: After the sperm hits the ovum, with the first division the life already begins.

So they asked the third one for his view. And the Rabbi promptly replied: When the kids are out of the house and the dog is dead, this is when the life really begins.

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. De Roubaix JAM, Van Niekerk AA. Separation-survivability – the elusive moral cut-off

## AIDS prevention: Rapes, needlesticks and stabs

To the Editor: I recently attended the HIV course held in Durban by the Foundation for Professional Development. The course was most informative and brought to light some interesting statistics about HIV transmission rates in various scenarios. A comparison that I found most fascinating was that an individual had a 0.1 % risk of contracting the virus during a single episode of sexual intercourse, whereas a percutaneous exposure (such as a needlestick injury) posed a 3 times greater risk. This then got me thinking about the government's current

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