



# Who's Right? Whose Rights?

## Learning Objectives

- Introduction to embryology and fetal development.
- Potential factors which may affect the development of the unborn child.
- Ethical Issues surrounding the rights of an unborn child.

## Answers

1. Alcohol (ethanol is the causative agent) causes birth defects by crossing the placenta and entering into the fetal circulatory system. Ethanol impairs placental blood flow by constricting blood vessels inducing lack of oxygen and fetal malnutrition.
2. Here are some possible points of view that the various stakeholders may have. Of course, students may think of further points not listed here - this is merely a guide to help you get started.

### Pregnant woman

- May be acting on advice from her doctor that 1-2 alcoholic beverages will not cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- May be asserting her right as an individual to have an alcoholic beverage whatever the consequences to the fetus.

### Waiter

- Feels responsibility to the fetus.
- Thinks no pregnant woman should be allowed alcohol in case of damage to the fetus
- Worried about legal responsibility.

### Restaurant owner

- Anxious about legal questions.
- Anxious about well-being of employee.
- Anxious about well-being of customers.
- Anxious about lost revenue.

### Fetus

- Evidence shows excessive drinking is associated with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- Fetus has no legal rights until it is born.

### Health insurer

- Bottom line is to save money.
- Illegal not to offer health care to a person who refuses to stop drinking or smoking.

### Doctor

- General advice is that drinking in moderation is OK for the woman and the fetus.
- May have had experience to the contrary which will cloud opinion.

### Alcohol manufacturer

- Make money! Sell alcohol to anyone.
- May need to put warning labels on products.
- May want to assist campaign of warning pregnant women against excessive drinking to protect from legal consequences.

## Resources

Reference Sheet C