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laws mean I can't help my pregnant patients – even if they're dying of cancer

As Irish voters head to the polls, GP Dr Tiernan Murray reveals that under current abortion laws he's prevented from giving pregnant patients the treatment they need, in case the foetus is harmed

COMMENT

By Doctor Tiernan Murray, in Ireland

25th May 2018, 11:48 am Updated: 25th May 2018, 1:09 pm



2 COMMENTS

THE young woman sitting in my office had cancer – yet, despite my best wishes, I had no choice but to deny her life-saving

treatment.

Her best option would have been radiotherapy, but she was pregnant and, because in Irish law the foetus is equal to a woman's life, this treatment could not be given to her.



Doctor Tiernan Murray has had to refuse treatments to pregnant patients with cancer because of Ireland's abortion laws

Pregnant women with cancer can't have certain scans and there are large numbers of drugs, including antibiotics, they aren't allowed so her chance of surviving was severely diminished.

It was one of the most difficult cases I've had in my career as a GP.

I'm a representative of Doctors Together For Yes – and thousands of doctors and nurses like me will be voting Yes to repealing anti-abortion laws in today's referendum.

We want abortion to be legal in Ireland so that we can help women in need as the Eighth Amendment - which rules that the lives of unborn babies are equal to the lives of their mothers - stops me from doing my job.

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by Taboola

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A divided Ireland heads to the polls today to vote on the tricky moral issue of whether abortion should be legalised or not

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We can't do anything for women in a crisis pregnancy

I had another young patient whose foetus was developing without a brain or a skull and would die within a short period of time after it's born. The death rate is 100 per cent.

I had to tell this woman that she'd have to go through the pregnancy, deliver the baby, and watch it die – or go to England for a termination, which costs thousands of pounds.

Plus, if the woman wants to bring her baby's body home for a burial, she has to pay to come home on the ferry with it in a little coffin.

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NAUGHTY NOUGHTIES

Irish abortions by numbers

9 women a day travel to UK for an abortion

50 women have either died or been harmed because they were denied an abortion

6,000 abortion pills were seized by the police in Ireland last year

14 years in prison for taking illegal abortion pills

170,216 women travelled to England for abortion in the last 30 years

22 is the average age of a woman seeking an abortion

1 in 10 Irish women of reproductive age have had an abortion



9

Doctors like Tiernan Murray are forced to report women who may be considering an abortion

She also has to stop on the way home to pick up ice to put in the coffin so that the body doesn't rot.

Lastly, at customs, she has to explain to the staff why she has a

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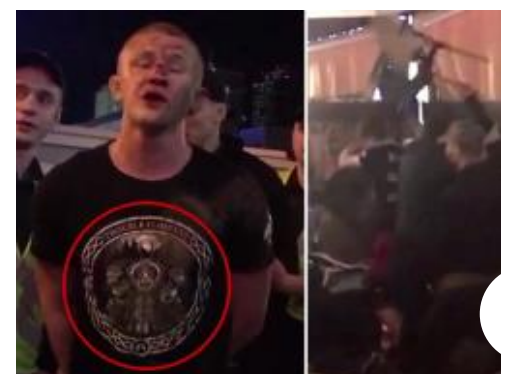
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body in a coffin coming in to the country.

Anti-abortion groups have argued we could have a law allowing fatal foetal abnormalities to be aborted – however that isn't legally possible under the Eighth Amendment.

And it's not just pregnancies with fatal foetal abnormalities that are affected by the Eighth Amendment.

ABORTION SERVICES						
Client Fees - Euros/Sterling	Initial Consultation		Treatment Price		Total	
Pregnancy Testing	FREE		FREE		FREE	
Abortion	€	£	€	£	€	£
Abortion pill under 10 weeks	€130	€110	€380	€315	€510	€425
Surgical under 14 weeks	€130	€110	€440	€365	€570	€475
Surgical 14 - 18 weeks	€130	€110	€700	€585	€830	€695
Surgical 18- 24 weeks & Medical 11-24 weeks	€130	€110	€1570	€1325	€1700	€1435

CONTRACEPTION SERVICES		Total	
Emergency Hormonal Contraception Levonelle	€10	£10	
Emergency Hormonal Contraception ellaOne	€20	£15	
Depo Provera supply and inject	€40	£30	
Jaydess supply & fit	€130	£110	
LARC supply & fit	€190	£150	
LARC removal	€120	£100	
IUCD supply and fit	€80	£60	
IUCD fit only	€50	£40	
NuvaRing Contraceptive vaginal ring (3 months supply)	€60	£50	
Patch (EVRA)	€30	£25	

OTHER SERVICES		Total	
Chlamydia Screening at consultation	€40	£30	
Post Operative Counselling - BPAS client	FREE	FREE	
Post Operative Counselling (if not treated by BPAS)	€100		
Pregnancy Testing - BPAS client	FREE		

KIEV CHICKENS Horror moment cow jobs from brutal hooligan firm ambush Liverpool fans



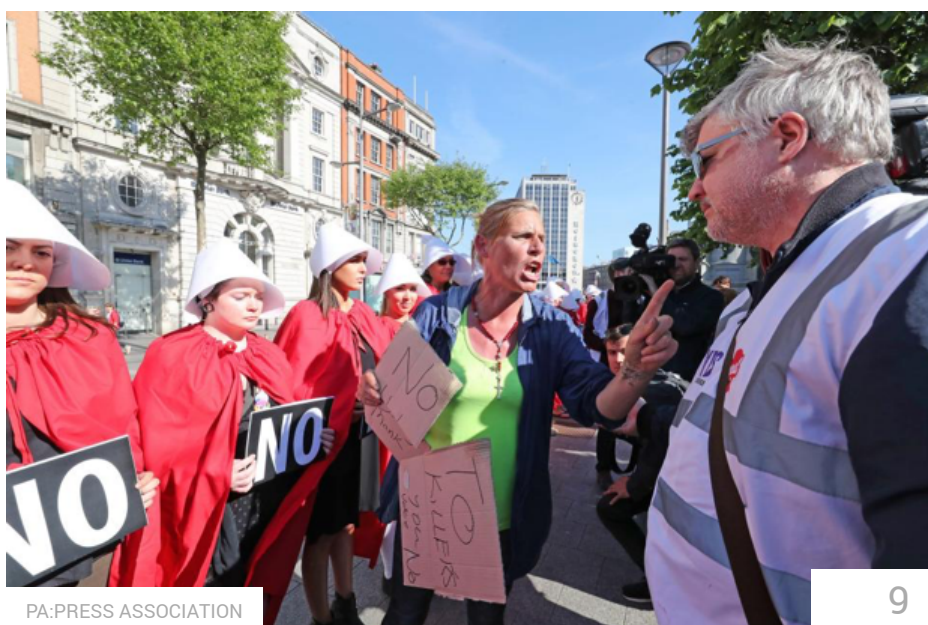
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The deeply catholic country has turned into a battleground in

anticipation of today's vote

I had a patient who was 42-years-old when she got pregnant. Her husband was an unemployed alcoholic, so they had financial struggles.

She had one child with Down's syndrome and one with autism and told me that she couldn't continue with this pregnancy - but she had to.

Another woman with severe diabetes came to me when she became pregnant but I couldn't give her some of the medication she needed because it might harm the baby.

Her care was reduced and she could have gone blind from diabetes.



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Anti-abortion laws mean even seriously unwell pregnant women can't be given medicines which could harm an unborn baby

14 years in prison

Under current Irish law, a woman who has been raped and has an abortion illegally could technically face more jail time than the man who raped her. That's shocking.

Doctors are legally obliged to report women who they believe are planning to have an abortion.

It is a crime to aid a woman in procuring an abortion, punishable by up to 14 years for the woman or the doctor.

Despite this, thousands of women a year are buying and using illegal abortion pills (6,000 pills were seized by the police in Ireland



last year) – although I've never had a woman take any in my surgery because they know that I'd have to report them to the police.



AXE TO GRIND Baseball bat-wielding smash up family's £54k Audi with PI



'I'VE DONE NOTHING' EDL founder Robinson arrested while filming outside court

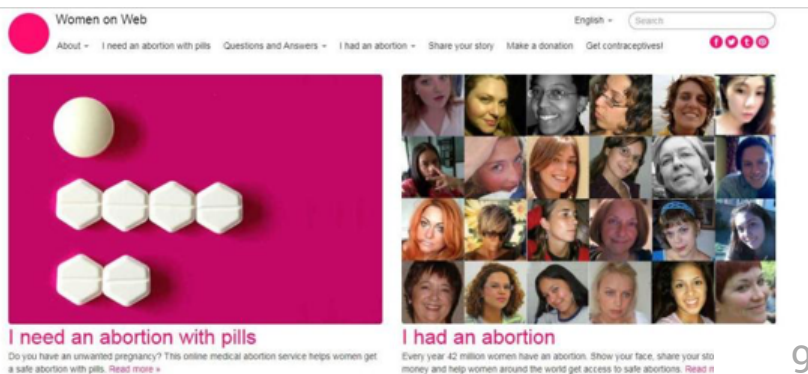
Pro-choice campaigners want to repeal the Eighth Amendment, which rules that the lives of unborn babies and mothers are equal

Websites like [Women on Web](#) provide women with safe medication and consultation, so most women get their abortion pills on there. They usually cost below £85.

Although the World Health Organisation says they're safe, there will be cases where things go wrong.

There will be some women who can't take the pills, such as those with other medical conditions.

If a woman is bleeding, scared, or doesn't think the abortion has happened properly, she can't see a doctor or tell hospital staff without admitting she's broken the law.



Some Irish women are forced to take abortion pills in their own home without consulting doctors

Most doctors don't ask, because they don't want to

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This inability to be honest is clearly putting women's lives at risk.

My job is not to make decisions for people, it's to deliver a service. So, for these women, I can't do what they want, or what is best for them. It's tragic.

There are also cases when women have died as a result of doctors' inaction, such as [Savita Halappanavar](#).

She was about 17 weeks pregnant and was miscarrying but there was still a heartbeat so the doctor could not do the abortion that would save her life.

Savita died shortly after from sepsis.



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Savita Halappanavar died of sepsis after doctors refused to abort her baby, which stood no chance of surviving

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out:

In Ireland doctors have the knowledge and the technology to help women. But the law stops them from doing their job.

The current law and the “No” side of this argument, sees women as frivolous incubators.

Around 200,000 Irish women have had abortions – so why aren't we dealing with the truth?

Dr Tiernan Murray was talking to Ella Whelan

Meet the 'No' campaigners fighting to keep abortion illegal in Ireland

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MC

15 hours ago

Its not a choice..its a child. Its become too common in the U.S. to get an abortion. It should be used as a LAST resort..not as a first. The first choice should be not go out and party and open your legs, use condoms (for guys), and think before you do it. Its called personal responsibility. Woman nowadays get an abortion as easy as going down to get botox. Yes, there needs to be some adjustments --- womans health, rape (even then there are options). But woman who go get 3 or 4 abortions should be denied.

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Colonel Mustard

16 hours ago

This is a debate where both sides feel they are correct. I am anti abortion unless the mother's life is at risk or the woman has been subjected to abuse / rape. Let the vote commence and see how the majority votes.

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