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## **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FEMALES BY WAY OF GENDER BASED ABORTIONS**

The Canadian Medical Association Journal (January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012) has identified a problem that is occurring in Canada due to abortions based on gender. The editorial recommends a direct ban or restrictions on the disclosure of medically irrelevant information such as the gender of the child, to pregnant women until after about 30 weeks of pregnancy, at which time far fewer abortions are performed.

This problem was previously identified by Statistics Canada in 2006 when it reported that abortions for gender reasons were being performed in several areas in Canada highly populated by immigrants.

Cultures from some countries traditionally desire to preserve the bloodlines through the male offspring, and it is this preference that now seems to be in effect in certain areas in Canada.

There is currently no distinction under Canadian abortion law between abortions performed for medical reasons and abortions performed for any other reason. That is, under our current federal abortion law, there is no prohibition of abortion on the grounds of the gender of the child.

The loss of females by way of sex selection abortions devalues all women and their contributions to society in the past, present and the future. The availability of such abortions can result in family pressure on women to have an abortion –which is unacceptable bullying that can traumatize such women.

REAL Women of Canada has been alarmed for some time about abortions based on gender, in Canada. In June 2006 we wrote to all provincial and territorial Ministers of Health requesting that they look into this matter and regulate the ultra-sound procedures to prohibit the disclosure of a child's gender prior to birth, so as to preclude abortions being performed for gender reasons.

REAL Women of Canada therefore endorses the recommendation in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, especially since the sex of the child in the womb is medically irrelevant information (except when managing rare sex-linked illnesses) and does not affect care.

Although women may seek gender information from other private sources, or use other medical techniques to determine the sex of the child, this requires time, effort and money. In contrast, the ultra-sound procedure is now carried out on a regular basis under provincial health services in pre-natal care in Canada, and is the most common source of information on the child's gender. Consequently to prohibit the disclosure of the gender until after 30 weeks will save the lives of a number of females.

Equality between the sexes and the prohibition of discrimination against females, applies throughout the entire life span. What do other rights matter if the child is not allowed to be born, simply because she is of the female gender?

Contact: C. Gwendolyn Landolt National Vice President, (905) 889-1993  
(905) 731-5425 (answering machine)

Researcher Diane Watts (613) 236-4001