

Implementation and Functions of the Medical Board for Termination of Pregnancy Beyond 24 Weeks: Experience at GGMC, Mumbai

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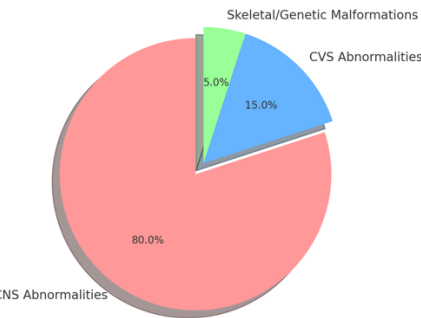
INTRODUCTION-

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Act, 2021, introduced provisions for terminating pregnancies beyond 24 weeks of gestation through Medical Boards established under Section 3(2C) of the Act. These Boards assess cases involving severe fetal anomalies or maternal health risks, ensuring safety, ethical decision-making, and legal compliance. Their responsibilities include examining patients, reviewing reports, consulting specialists, and delivering opinions within three days, followed by safe termination procedures within five days if approved. In accordance with the Act, a Medical Board for Mumbai city and suburbs was constituted at Grant Government Medical College (GGMC) and Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals on July 19, 2023. Since then, the Board has managed 78 cases, addressing fetal conditions such as anencephaly and skeletal dysplasia, and maternal risks. This study evaluates the Board's multidisciplinary approach, efficiency, and outcomes in delivering timely, patient-centered care.

DISCUSSION-

The establishment of the Medical Board at GGMC, Mumbai, under the MTP Amendment Act, 2021, marks a significant advancement in addressing pregnancies beyond 24 weeks of gestation. Since its inception, the Board has reviewed 78 cases, demonstrating a structured and ethical approach to managing complex scenarios. CNS abnormalities accounted for 80% of cases, including conditions such as anencephaly, Arnold Chiari malformation, and meningocele. CVS abnormalities, such as hypoplastic left heart syndrome, contributed to 15%, while 5% involved rare genetic and skeletal malformations. The rejection of three cases, including choroid plexus cyst, CTEV, and maternal tumors with poor prognosis, highlights the Board's adherence to strict medical and legal criteria. The Board's multidisciplinary framework, comprising obstetricians, radiologists, and geneticists, has ensured well-rounded evaluations and informed decision-making. The inclusion of external specialists for rare and complex conditions has further improved diagnostic accuracy. The Board's reliance on existing reports where possible minimizes patient travel and expedites decision-making. By adhering to legal mandates, the Board ensures opinions are issued within three days, and approved procedures are completed within five days, significantly reducing delays and anxiety for patients. This approach, guided by Hon'ble High Court directives, has minimized the need for court interventions, providing timely and cost-effective solutions. However, challenges such as logistical constraints and resource limitations persist. Streamlined processes, improved coordination among specialists, and ongoing training of Board members are essential to maintaining efficiency and compliance with evolving medical and legal standards. Additionally, bolstering infrastructure support can enhance service delivery and address administrative hurdles. The GGMC Medical Board serves as a model for managing late-term pregnancies, showcasing the importance of a multidisciplinary, patient-centered, and legally compliant approach.

Distribution of Anomalies in Medical Board Cases



10 THE GAZETTE OF INDIA: EXTRAORDINARY [PART II—SEC. 3(1)]

Form B
 (See sub-clause (ii) of clause (b) of rule 1A)
Report of the Medical Board for Pregnancy Termination Beyond 24 weeks

Details of the woman seeking termination of pregnancy:

- Name of the woman
- Age
- Registration/Case Number
- Available reports and investigations:

S.No	Report	Opinion on the findings

5. Additional Investigations (if done):

S.No	Investigations done	Key findings

6. Opinion by Medical Board for termination of pregnancy:
 a) Allowed
 b) Denied

Justification for the decision:
 7. Physical fitness of the woman for the termination of pregnancy:
 a. Yes
 b. No

Members of the Medical Board who reviewed the case:

S.No	Name	Signature

Date and Time:.....

CONCLUSION-

The GGMC Medical Board has proven to be a cornerstone in addressing complex pregnancies beyond 24 weeks of gestation. The Board's multidisciplinary approach has been pivotal in delivering comprehensive evaluations, enhancing diagnostic precision, and ensuring patient-centered care. Its ability to issue timely decisions and perform procedures within legal timeframes has reduced patient distress and avoided delays, setting a high standard for institutional efficiency. Furthermore, by minimizing the reliance on judicial processes, the Board has alleviated financial and logistical burdens for patients. Despite its success, challenges such as logistical constraints and resource limitations require immediate attention. Addressing these challenges through streamlined administrative processes, enhanced infrastructure, and continuous training can further strengthen the Board's impact. The GGMC Medical Board stands as a model of excellence in late-term pregnancy management. By sustaining its commitment to ethical, efficient, and patient-focused care, it can continue to provide vital support to women facing complex pregnancies, setting benchmarks for similar initiatives nationwide.

REFERENCES-

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