



The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

**ACOG**  
THE AMERICAN CONGRESS  
OF OBSTETRICIANS  
AND GYNECOLOGISTS

# *Statement of Policy*

As Issued by the Executive Board of the  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

## **GLOBAL WOMEN'S HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

Acknowledging the significant interplay of women's human rights with the overall health of women and society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) ardently support efforts to improve the dignity, autonomy, rights and health of women in the United States and globally. ACOG endorses the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) resolutions regarding the rights of women, the relationship of these rights to human rights, and the social responsibility obstetrician-gynecologists have to promote and protect women's health in their individual and professional encounters.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> To this end, ACOG commits to encourage and uphold policies and action in the United States and across the world to assure that women have:

1. The right to be full and responsible citizens of their countries, with equal property, economic, voting and freedom of movement rights.
2. The right to equal education.
3. The right to work and earn a living with equal pay for equal work.
4. The right to be free of all forms of gender based violence such as domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, female infanticide, honor killings, female genital cutting and self-immolation at a husband's death.
5. The right to the best available, scientifically based health care, including health and sexuality education.
6. The right to autonomous decision-making, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality regarding their own health care.
7. The right to participate equally in ethically conducted clinical and other research.<sup>4</sup>
8. The right to decide when and if to have sex, including choosing one's partner, and freedom from coerced marriage and sex trafficking.
9. The right to decide whether to have children, the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education and access to health services to make these choices.
10. The right to safe childbearing, with resources available to reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

<sup>1</sup>FIGO professional and ethical responsibilities concerning sexual and reproductive rights. International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics; 2003. Available at: [http://www.figo.org/files/figo-corp/Rights-Based\\_%20Code\\_of\\_Ethics\\_October%202003.pdf](http://www.figo.org/files/figo-corp/Rights-Based_%20Code_of_Ethics_October%202003.pdf). Retrieved July 20, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>FIGO resolution on professional and ethical responsibilities concerning sexual and reproductive rights. London: International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics; 2003. Available at: [http://www.figo.org/projects/ethical\\_responsibility](http://www.figo.org/projects/ethical_responsibility). Retrieved July 20, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>Resolution on reproductive and sexual health. London: International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics; 2000. Available at: [http://www.figo.org/projects/reproductive\\_and\\_sexual\\_health](http://www.figo.org/projects/reproductive_and_sexual_health). Retrieved July 20, 2012.

<sup>4</sup>Ethical considerations for performing gynecologic surgery in low-resource settings abroad. Committee Opinion No. 466. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2010;116:793-9.

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