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Reply

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Reply

We would like to respond to the issues raised by Dr. Lane and his colleagues and to reiterate, as was clearly stated in our article, that the fetuses were legally obtained. In our study, we used 13 fetuses ranging from 7 to 28 weeks gestational age. Seven of these fetuses, ranging from 13 to 21 weeks, were aborted legally under the Eugenics and Maternal Protection Law in Japan. Three fetuses, ranging from 23 to 28 weeks, were stillborn and obtained over a 6-year period from 1977 to 1982. They were kept in our departments with the written consent of their parents for use in education and research. Another three fetuses, ranging from 7 to 11 weeks, had been collected for educational use in the Anatomical Department of the institute to which one of the authors (A.Y.) belonged, and we borrowed them for this study.

The questions concerning the ethical issues raised by Dr. Lane and his colleagues in the second paragraph of their letter are unwarranted. Ethical issues arising in this kind of study using fetal materials are of equal concern to us just as they seem to be to Dr. Lane.

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Editor's Note

As noted by Dr. Kinoshita, the fetal material was legally obtained; neither the editors of the *AJNR* nor the reviewers of this article had any reason to believe that there was anything illegal and unethical surrounding the investigation. The *AJNR* is well aware of this subject's being, as Dr. Lane says, a "hot button" issue; however, in the process of producing a scientific journal, we do not demand that authors send proof that material of whatever sort was legally obtained nor do we demand that authors send us all the documentation that led to appropriate Internal Review Board approval. At some point, the journal has to trust the honesty of the investigators to report the facts (in this case, "legal abortions") accurately.

Dr. Lane and colleagues have asked a series of questions, including whether the parents were given monetary compensation and what type of abortion procedure was used. These questions are pejorative in nature and are clearly outside the realm of the article. Furthermore, to even obliquely equate the Editors and the Editorial Board of the *AJNR* with Nazi physicians is highly offensive and defamatory to the editors of the *AJNR*, to the staff of our journal, and to the reviewers who evaluate submitted manuscripts. In addition, Dr. Lane and colleagues had no inkling of the circumstances surrounding these fetuses, as is clear from Dr. Kinoshita's response, so that their characterization of "profiting intellectually from the killing of healthy babies" is inflammatory at best and positioned them on one side of a situation about which they had no knowledge.

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Editor-in-Chief