

Aug. 4, 2022

Dear IFCN,

Annenberg Fact Check (FactCheck.org), like other mainstream media fact checkers, addressed the question of whether abortion is ever medically necessary with a fallaciously equivocal argument. It then ignored a correction request pointing out the error, showing a failure to follow the IFCN principle calling for scrupulous adherence to an open and honest corrections policy.

FactCheck.org's fallacy was blatant. It reported how "anti-abortion" activists defined abortion in two different cases, then proceeded to disprove the claims they made through use of a different definition ([fallacy of equivocation](#)).

Dr. Kendra Kolb (as reported by FactCheck.org, bold emphasis added):

"there is no medical reason why the life of the child must be directly and intentionally ended with an abortion procedure."

Dr. Christina Francis (as reported by FactCheck.org):

She defines abortion as a procedure that is intended to "produce a dead baby," and says, "That's not the intent when we intervene to save a woman's life when she has a ruptured ectopic pregnancy or she's going through a miscarriage."

In both cases the "anti-abortionist" activists identified the type of abortions they oppose—those that deliberately end the life of the embryo/fetus. FactCheck.org then cites doctors who say abortion is sometimes medically necessary. But the definition has apparently shifted, for the fact check makes no attempt to match their definitions to the definitions used by the "anti-abortion" doctors. Nor does FactCheck.org attempt to show that the "anti-abortionists" defined abortion incorrectly. The latter strategy would end up contradicting FactCheck.org's own use of the term "anti-abortion," of course. A neutral press should not identify activists with terms that misrepresent their beliefs. The term "Anti-abortion" must use "abortion" in a manner consistent with the beliefs of the "anti-abortion" person or else it counts as a deception.

I contacted Annenberg Fact Check to [request a correction on July 15, 2022](#). FactCheck.org made [no apparent attempt to fix its error](#) and no apparent attempt to justify or explain away its equivocation.

Accordingly, I report the case as an example of FactCheck.org failing to scrupulously follow an open and honest corrections policy.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
Editor and publisher, Zebra Fact Check