



Fig. 1. New fourth-generation HIV test protocol.

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Abortion – an elusive moral cut-off point?

To the Editor: The argument about some theoretical 'cut-off' point has an unrecognised objective: to deflect, allay or absolve guilt in the aborting mother or the operator of the abortion.

These arguments are based on 'moral' grounds, ignoring the higher issue of the spiritual self. To discount the Spirit is to discount humanity: you have a body, you have a mind ... yet you are a spirit.

Contrary to conventional wisdom the fetus does think, does have emotions and certainly displays survival behaviour. The truth is that the fetus is intensely concerned with its survivability – not only from a physical perspective but still more powerfully at an emotional and spiritual level.

Separation-survivability theory operates from the perspective of physical survival but, with respect, ignores the great suffering experienced emotionally and spiritually by the fetus, and occasionally physically, from as early as the first trimester.

I will not sit idly by without comment. I emphatically vote for the Conservatives.

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- 1. De Roubaix JAM, Van Niekerk, AA. Separation-survivability – the elusive cut-off point? S Afr Med J 2006; 96: 623-626.
2. Modlin CT. The psychodynamics of the prenatal experience. Serenity 2006; 4 (2): 2-6.

To the Editor: The article by De Roubaix and Van Niekerk<sup>1</sup> is interesting and thought provoking.

As they try to define the moral cut-off point, they discuss different views on the time-old question – when does life begin? In my humble opinion, they left out one important theory: the pragmatic view.

Three clerics were talking about the beginning of life.

Said the first: When the baby is born, with the first breath the soul enters the body and the life begins.

The second cleric disagreed: After the sperm hits the ovum, with the first division the life already begins.

So they asked the third one for his view. And the Rabbi promptly replied: When the kids are out of the house and the dog is dead, this is when the life really begins.

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- 1. De Roubaix JAM, Van Niekerk AA. Separation-survivability – the elusive moral cut-off point? S Afr Med J 2006; 96: 623-626.

AIDS prevention: Rapes, needlesticks and stabs

To the Editor: I recently attended the HIV course held in Durban by the Foundation for Professional Development. The course was most informative and brought to light some interesting statistics about HIV transmission rates in various scenarios.



strategies to prevent the transmission of HIV. All rape victims are offered HIV prophylaxis; however, has anyone considered that a trauma victim (if, for example, multiple victims have been stabbed with a single knife) may have a far greater risk of contracting the virus than a rape victim, and yet there are no guidelines in place to offer these patients any prophylaxis?

I would greatly appreciate any response from other SAMA members regarding the above matter, and would love to see

this letter published in the *SAMJ*. I hope that someone will take note and consider implementing some guidelines that would assist our many trauma victims.

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## Bring back the old and the worn

(to the tune 'Have some Madeira, m'dear', acknowledgements to Flanders and Swan)

If you open the *Argus*, the *Guardian* too,  
Or you read any chic magazine,  
In English or French, Japanese or Urdu,  
Or watch telly, where Oprah's our Queen,  
You will see that it's cool to be yuppie (so-called),  
They have pensioned the ancient and staid,  
The oldies have hair now, the youngsters are bald;  
And just look at the mess that they've made.

### Refrain

Bring back the old and the worn  
Don't treat us old people with scorn  
The young have no balance, perception or taste  
They're unready to lead when they're still freckle-faced,  
Bring back the old and the worn –  
Don't rely on the brash newly born,  
In us you find wisdom, refinement and guile,  
You can't beat maturity, polish and style,  
But because of our backache it may take a while –  
Bring back the old and the worn.

The corporate ladder is there to be climbed,  
By young ones – whizz kids and Dot coms,  
With a click of their mouse, their success is real-timed  
It's the same with the Aussies and Poms.  
When you're twenty or less the whole world's at your feet,  
But you're burnt out at one score and eight.  
If you're female and darkish, you're in easy-street,  
So please hurry, and don't vacillate.

### Refrain

Bring back the old and the worn  
Sack the youth from Shanghai to Cape Horn  
The young have no balance, perception or taste  
They're unready to lead when their teeth are still braced  
Bring back the old and the worn,  
Sound the message on trumpet and horn;  
Bring back the abacus, blackboard and chalk  
We don't need E-commerce and Internet talk  
We may not quite hear you, but we can still walk –  
Bring back the old and the worn.

Our Rand's below Kleenex and Afghan Dinar,  
While our petrol goes right through the roof,  
And if by good fortune we manage a car  
It has got to be knopkierie-proof.  
Then there's that thing called AIDS (though the cause isn't clear)  
And corruption's the grand *leit motif*;  
Thank goodness there's Manto who'll always be there  
To provide us with some light relief.

### Refrain

Bring back the old and the worn  
You'll be sorry as hell when we're gorn;  
To remember your surnames we may be hard-press'd  
And we're not a good sight when you see us undress'd  
But bring back the old and the worn,  
Though this cry from the heart is forlorn;  
I don't wish to pester or bother or nag  
But the worth of our country is certain to sag  
When you lower your standards, your trousers, your flag;  
Bring back the old and the worn.

### Maurice Kibel

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