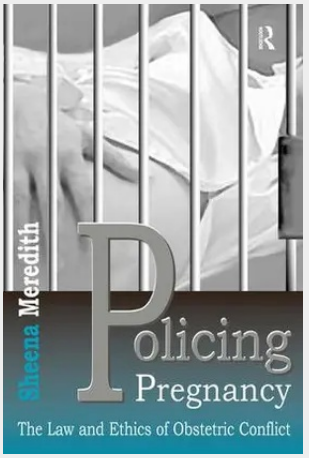
Meredith

Policing Pregnancy

The Law and Ethics of Obstetric Conflict

Are pregnant women entitled to the same rights of self-determination and bodily integrity as other adults? This is the fundamental question underlying recent high-profile legal interventions in situations when pregnant women and healthcare staff do not agree on management options or appropriate behaviour. Courts on both sides of the Atlantic have sometimes answered that they are not, and the law has at times been manipulated to enforce compliance with medical recommendations. This is the first book of its kind to offer a comprehensive assessment of healthcare law as applied to the unique situation of pregnancy. Drawing on case material from both the UK and the USA, it describes the trend towards 'policing pregnancy' and explores the emergence of the concept of 'maternal-foetal conflict' - and why, in the author's view, this would be more appropriately labelled 'obstetric conflict'. Suggestions are made for alternative approaches that better safeguard the overall well-being of pregnant women and their future children.



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