



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 12, 2010

Smiling Fetus Captured in Photograph

Britain's Daily Mail reports that a 17-week-old fetus was captured smiling in a sonogram scan. According to the publication, "The scan ... implies that a baby can experience feelings such as happiness and pain much earlier in its development than previously thought."

The child in the image belongs to Louise and Sam Henry from Swallowfield, Berkshire, who have indicated that they are shocked to see such an image in what is typically a routine scan.

Mr. Henry said, "Your primary concern at that stage is that you have a healthy baby but to see the fetus smiling was absolutely fantastic."

Baby Henry is due in January.

Pro-life advocates have cited a variety of reasons to reject abortion, including the presence of alternative options like adoption, health risks to the mother, and the immoral use of federal tax dollars to finance such a procedure. However, the primary reason cited by pro-life advocates to reject abortion is the notion that life begins at conception. A smiling fetus helps to support this notion, as it shows that what has been classified as a "group of cells" by pro-abortion advocates is capable of human emotion.

Likewise, the scan contests claims made by pro-choice supporters that fetuses are incapable of feeling pain or any senses while in the womb, an argument that has been used to dispute claims that abortions are painful procedures to the fetus.

The image was taken by Professor Stuart Campbell, former head of obstetrics and gynecology at King's College and St. George's hospitals in London, with 3-D and 4-D scanning equipment. According to Campbell, the image does not necessarily show that the unborn child has feelings, but that it was capable of "displaying human behavior."

Campbell does not fully understand what caused the smile, but ventured a guess that it involves the same elements that cause a crying face: "It is part of a sequence that involves yawning and making breathing movements and opening its eyelids and, of course, it makes a crying face."

Of course, some critics claim that the smiling face is no indication of human emotion. Eric Jauniaux, professor of obstetrics and fetal medicine at University College London, for example, asserts, "There is no emotion or feeling at this stage. The evidence of gain and feeling is from 24 or 28 weeks."

Jauniaux adds, "At 17 weeks the connection between the brain and the rest of the body is very limited."

On the other hand, Dr. Yehundi Gordon of the Viveka gynecology clinic in London claims, "All the emotional centers that we will ever have during our lives are fully formed by the time we are born. At 17 weeks the baby could be smiling or it could be the facial muscles getting together in preparation for





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sucking and feeding.”

The fetal image is reminiscent of the now-famous picture of the fetus reaching out to grab a surgeon’s finger during fetal surgery. Despite the debate that arose from that released photograph, photographer Michael Clancy confirmed that the 21-week old fetus Samuel Armus reached out from his mother’s womb and grasped Dr. Joseph Bruner’s finger as he performed a successful spina bifida surgery on the fetus in 1999.

According to a nurse present during the surgery, babies undergoing surgery do that “all the time.”

As far as the smiling fetus, Professor Campbell concludes, “This is a joyful expression of the humanity of the fetus. I have seen a fetus making a crying face at around 18 or 19 weeks, but not a nice smile. This is the earliest on record — It is just a delight.”

Photo is an example of a 3-D sonogram, not one of the baby in question



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