

# RESEARCH AND KEY FACTS

## Abortion's Harm to Women

### PUBLISHED STUDIES

#### Significant Risk of Injury and Death from Abortion

- **PHYSICAL RISKS**  
Immediate complications, infertility and death
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL RISKS**  
Trauma, depression and 6 times higher suicide rate
- **MOST ARE UNWANTED OR COERCED**  
Coercion can be intense, even violent
- **RECENT ELLIOT INSTITUTE RESEARCH**  
Published studies on abortion complications
  - British Medical Journal, 2002
  - American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2002
  - Southern Medical Journal, 2002
  - Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2003
  - American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2000 & 2004
  - American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 2002
  - Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2002
  - Medical Science Monitor, 2003 & 2004
  - Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy, 2004
  - Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 2005
  - British Journal of Health Psychology, 2005
  - Sleep, 2006
- **OTHER KEY STUDIES**  
Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2006  
Journal of Psychiatric Research, 2008  
British Journal of Psychiatry, 2008  
Public Health, 2009  
International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction, 2008  
Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 2006  
Finland studies—6x higher suicide rate, 3x higher death rates

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## Recent Research

### Abortion's Harm to Women

#### 1. 62% Higher Risk of Death from All Causes, 2.5 Times Higher Risk of Suicide

Compared to women who give birth, women who abort have an elevated risk of death from all causes, which persists for at least eight years. Higher risk of death from suicide and accidents were most prominent. Projected on the national population, this effect may contribute to 2,000 - 5,000 more deaths among women each year.<sup>1</sup>

**Southern Medical Journal, 2002**

#### 2. 3.5 Times Higher Death Rates from Suicide, Accidents, Homicides (Suicide 6 Times Higher)

Researchers examining deaths among the entire population of women in Finland found that those who had abortions had a 3.5 times higher death rate from suicide, accidents, or homicides in the following year. Suicide rates among aborting women were six times higher compared to women who gave birth and two times higher compared to women who miscarried.<sup>2</sup>

**European Journal of Public Health, 2005**

#### 3. Abortion Deaths Underreported on Death Certificates

A study of medical records in Finland found that 94 % of maternal deaths associated with abortion are not identifiable from death certificates alone. The researchers found that linking death certificates to medical records showed that the death rate associated with abortion is three times higher than that associated with childbirth.<sup>3</sup>

**Paediatric Perinatal Epidemiology, 2004**

#### 4. 65% Suffered Trauma, 31% Had Health Complications

In this study comparing American and Russian women who had experienced abortion, 65% of American women studied experienced multiple symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which they attributed to their abortions. Slightly over 14% reported all the symptoms necessary for a clinical diagnosis of abortion induced PTSD, and 84% said they did not receive adequate counseling. 31% had health complications afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

**Medical Science Monitor, 2004**

#### 5. 64% Involve Coercion, 84% Not Fully Informed

In the above study comparing American and Russian women who had experienced abortion, 64% of American women reported that they felt pressured by others to abort. 84% said they did not receive adequate counseling.<sup>5</sup>

**Medical Science Monitor, 2004**

#### 6. Abortion Linked to Wide Range of Mental Health Disorders

A survey of 5,877 women found that women who had abortions were at higher risk for various mental health disorders. Researchers studied 15 different mental health problems, including anxiety disorders (panic disorder, panic attacks, agoraphobia, post-traumatic stress disorder), mood disorders (bipolar disorder, mania, major depression) and substance abuse disorders. Abortion made a significant contribution for 12 out of the 15 disorders studied.<sup>6</sup>

**Journal of Psychiatric Research, 2008**

#### 7. 30% Higher Risk of Mental Health Problems After Abortion; Abortion Offers No Benefits

An ongoing survey of women in New Zealand found that women were 30 percent more likely to experience substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, anxiety disorders and major depression after abortion than after other pregnancy outcomes. No increase in mental health risks was found among women who continued an unplanned pregnancy, and the researchers said there was no evidence abortion offered any mental health benefits to women.<sup>7</sup>

**British Journal of Psychiatry, 2008**

**8. Higher Rates of Depression, Substance Abuse, Suicidal Behavior After Abortion**

In a New Zealand study, women who had abortions subsequently experienced higher rates of substance abuse, anxiety disorders, and suicidal behavior than women who had not had abortions, even after controlling for pre-existing conditions. Approximately 42% of women with a history of abortion had experienced major depression in the last four years (nearly double the rate of women who had not been pregnant and 35% higher than those who carried to term).<sup>8</sup>

**Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2006**

**9. Significantly Higher Risk of Clinical Depression**

Compared to women who carry their first unintended pregnancies to term, women who abort their first pregnancies are at significantly higher risk of clinical depression as measured an average of eight years after their first pregnancies.<sup>9</sup>

**British Medical Journal, 2002**

**10. 65% Higher Risk of Clinical Depression**

Analysis of a federally funded longitudinal study of American women revealed that, compared to women who gave birth, women who aborted were 65% more likely to be at risk of long-term clinical depression after controlling for age, race, education, marital status, history of divorce, income, and prior psychiatric state.<sup>10</sup>

**Medical Science Monitor, 2003**

**11. 30% Higher Risk of Generalized Anxiety Disorder**

Researchers compared women who had no prior history of anxiety and who had experienced a first, unintended pregnancy. Women who aborted were 30% more likely to subsequently report all the symptoms associated with a diagnosis for generalized anxiety disorder, compared to women who carried to term.<sup>11</sup>

**Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 2005**

**12. Five Times Higher Risk of Substance Abuse**

Women who abort are five times more likely to report subsequent drug or alcohol abuse than women who deliver.<sup>12</sup>

**American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2000**

**13. Unintended First Pregnancies: Increased Substance Abuse if Women Abort**

Among women who had unintended first pregnancies, those who had abortions were more likely to report, an average of four years later, more frequent and recent use of alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine than women who gave birth. This is the first study to compare substance abuse rates among women who had unintended pregnancies.<sup>13</sup>

**American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 2004**

**14. Nearly Twice as Likely to Be Treated for Sleep Disorders, Which Are Often Trauma-Related**

In a record based study of nearly 57,000 women with no known history of sleep disorders, women were more likely to be treated for sleep disorders after having an abortion compared to giving birth. Aborting women were nearly twice as likely to be treated for sleep disorders in the first 180 days after the pregnancy ended compared to delivering women. Numerous studies have shown that trauma victims will often experience sleep difficulties.<sup>14</sup>

**Sleep, 2006**

**15. Records-Based Study Indicates More Outpatient Psychiatric Care**

Analysis of California Medicaid records shows that women who have abortions subsequently require significantly more treatments for psychiatric illness through outpatient care.<sup>15</sup>

**American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 2002**

**16. 160% More Likely to be Hospitalized for Psychiatric Treatment**

A review of the medical records of 56,741 California Medicaid patients revealed that women who had abortions were 160% more likely than delivering women to be hospitalized for psychiatric treatment in the first 90 days following abortion or delivery. Psychiatric treatment rates remained significantly higher for at least four years.<sup>16</sup>

**Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2003**

**17. Abortion Increases Risk of Domestic Violence, Relationship Problems for Both Women and Men**

Compared to those with no history of abortion, both women and men who had an abortion with their current partner were more likely to report domestic violence, arguing about children and feeling that their lives would be better if the relationship ended. Women who had an abortion with their current partner reported more arguments about money and relatives, and were more likely to experience sexual dysfunction after abortion with a current or previous partner.<sup>17</sup>

**Public Health, 2009**

**18. Father's Role Significant in Deciding Pregnancy Outcome; Abortion Linked to Later Problems**

A survey of low-income women who had a previous child found that women who felt they could not rely on their partner to help in caring for the child were more likely to have an abortion. Women who had an abortion were more likely to report subsequent violence by their partner and to report heavy alcohol abuse (three times more likely) and cigarette smoking (twice as likely).<sup>18</sup>

**International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction, 2008**

**19. Screening for Known Risk Factors Would Dramatically Reduce Abortions**

This study is an analysis of 63 medical studies that identify risk factors that predict negative psychological reactions to abortion. The review concludes that the number of women suffering from negative emotional reactions to abortion could be dramatically reduced if abortion clinics screened women for these risk factors.<sup>19</sup>

**The Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy, 2004**

**20. Subsequent Children Are Negatively Affected**

The children of women who had abortions have less supportive home environments and more behavioral problems than children of women without a history of abortion. This finding supports the view that abortion may negatively affect bonding with subsequent children, disturb mothering skills, and otherwise impact a woman's psychological stability.<sup>20</sup>

**Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2002**

**21. Drug Abuse During Subsequent Pregnancies Five Times More Likely**

Among women delivering their first pregnancy, women with a history of abortion are five times more likely to use illicit drugs and two times more likely to use alcohol *during* their pregnancies. This substance use places their unborn children at risk of birth defects, low birth weight, and death.<sup>21</sup>

**American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dec. 2002**

**22. Increased Smoking and Drug Abuse During Subsequent Pregnancies**

A study of women who had just given birth found that compared to women who had experienced other types of pregnancy loss or had never had an abortion, women who had previously had an abortion are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana, cocaine, or other illegal drugs during pregnancy.<sup>22</sup>

**British Journal of Health Psychology, 2005**

**23. 95% Want To Be Fully Informed of All Statistically Associated Risks**

Women considering elective surgery, such as abortion, consider all information about physical or psychological risks to be very relevant to their decisions. 95% of patients wished to be informed of all risks statistically associated with a procedure, even if the causal connection between the procedure and risk has not been fully proven.<sup>23</sup>

**Journal of Medical Ethics, 2006**

**24. Teens Have More Mental Health Problems After Abortion, Even With Unplanned Pregnancies**

A nationally representative study found that teen girls who abort unintended pregnancies are five times more likely to seek subsequent help for psychological and emotional problems compared to their peers who carry unintended pregnancies to term. Teens who aborted were also three times more likely to report having trouble sleeping and nine times more likely to report subsequent marijuana use.<sup>24</sup>

**Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 2006**

**25. Abortion Increases Risk of Later Miscarriage by 60%**

Researchers in the U.K. surveyed women ages 18 to 55 about their reproductive histories, life-styles and relationships and found that women who had a previous abortion had a 60% higher risk of miscarriage during a later pregnancy.<sup>25</sup>

**BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, 2006**

**The Elliot Institute** was involved in many of the studies listed above. For more information, including links to some of the published papers and abstracts, visit [www.TheUnChoice.com/pblresearch.htm](http://www.TheUnChoice.com/pblresearch.htm).

# Physical Risks

## Significant, Even Deadly, Risks of Abortion

### Higher death risk, 6 times higher suicide

Compared to pregnant women who had their babies, pregnant women who aborted were ...

- **3.5 times more likely to die in the following year**
- **1.6 times more likely to die of natural causes**
- **6 times more likely to die of suicide**
- **14 times more likely to die from homicide**
- **4 times more likely to die of injuries related to accidents<sup>1</sup>**

Another study found that, compared to women who gave birth, women who had abortions had a 62% higher risk of death from all causes for at least *eight* years after their pregnancies. Deaths from suicides and accidents were most prominent, with deaths from suicides being 2.5 times higher.<sup>2</sup>

**Causes of death within a week** — The leading causes of abortion-related maternal deaths within a week of abortion are hemorrhage, infection, embolism, anesthesia complications, and undiagnosed ectopic pregnancies.<sup>3</sup>

**Cancer** — Significantly increased risk of breast cancer, cervical cancer, and lung cancer (probably due to heavier smoking patterns after abortion).<sup>4</sup>

**Immediate complications** — About 10% suffer immediate complications; one-fifth are life-threatening.<sup>5</sup>

- |                   |                          |                               |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • hemorrhage      | • infection              | • ripped or perforated uterus |
| • cervical injury | • embolism               | • anesthesia complications    |
| • convulsions     | • chronic abdominal pain | • cervical injury             |
| • endotoxic shock | • second-degree burns    | • Rh sensitization            |

**31% suffer health complications** — A recent study published in a major medical journal found that 31% of American women surveyed who had undergone abortions had health complications.<sup>6</sup>

**80%-180% increase in doctor visits** — Based on health care sought before and after abortion. On average, there is an 80% increase in doctor visits and a 180% increase in doctor visits for psychosocial reasons after abortion.<sup>7</sup>

**Self-destructive lifestyles, spiraling health problems** — Increased risk of promiscuity, smoking, drug abuse, and eating disorders, which all put the woman at increased risk for other health problems.<sup>8</sup>

### Infertility and life-threatening reproductive risks

Abortion can damage reproductive organs and cause long-term and sometimes permanent problems that can put future pregnancies at risk. Women who have abortions are more likely to experience ectopic pregnancies, infertility, hysterectomies, stillbirths, miscarriages, and premature births than women who have not had abortions.<sup>9</sup>

### Teens Face Higher Risk, 6 Times More Likely to Attempt Suicide

**Teens 6 times more likely to attempt suicide** — Teenage girls are 6 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last 6 months than are teens who have not had an abortion.<sup>10</sup>

**Reproductive damage and other complications** — Compared to teens who give birth, teens who abort are generally at higher risk of immediate complications and long-term reproductive damage after abortion than are older women.<sup>11</sup>

## **Higher risk of PID, 2.5 times higher risk of endometritis (a major cause of maternal death in future pregnancies)**

— Teens are at higher risk for dangerous infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease and endometritis after abortion. These infections increase their risk of infertility, hysterectomy, ectopic pregnancy, and other serious complications.<sup>12</sup>

### **Overview of reproductive complications and problems with subsequent deliveries**

**Pelvic Inflammatory Disease** — Abortion puts women at risk of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is a serious, life-threatening disease and a major direct cause of infertility. PID also increases risk of ectopic pregnancies. Studies have found that approximately one-fourth of women who have a chlamydia infection at the time of their abortion and 5% of women who don't have chlamydia will develop PID within four weeks after the abortion.<sup>13</sup>

**Placenta Previa** — After abortion, there is a seven- to 15-fold increase in placenta previa in subsequent pregnancies (a life-threatening condition for both the mother and her wanted pregnancy). Abnormal development of the placenta due to uterine damage increases the risk of birth defects, stillbirth, and excessive bleeding during labor.<sup>14</sup>

**Ectopic Pregnancy** — Post-abortive women have a significantly increased risk of subsequent ectopic pregnancies,<sup>15</sup> which are life threatening and may result in reduced fertility.

**Endometritis, a Major Cause of Death** — Abortion can result in for endometritis, which can lead to hospitalization and infertility problems. It is a major cause of maternal death during pregnancy.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Women who abort twice as likely to have pre-term or post-term deliveries.<sup>17</sup>**

- Women who had one, two, or more previous induced abortions are, respectively, 1.89, 2.66, or 2.03 times more likely to have a subsequent pre-term delivery, compared to women who carry to term. Pre-term delivery increases the risk of neonatal death and handicaps. The average hospital charge from delivery to discharge for a premature birth is \$58,000, compared to \$4,300 for a full-term birth.
- Women who had one, two, or more induced abortions are, respectively, 1.89, 2.61, and 2.23 times more likely to have a post-term delivery (over 42 weeks).

**Death or disability of newborns in later pregnancies** — Cervical and uterine damage may increase the risk of premature delivery, complications of labor, and abnormal development of the placenta in later pregnancies.<sup>16</sup> These complications are the leading causes of disabilities among newborns.

### **AfterAbortion.org/news**

The Elliot Institute was involved in all of the studies listed above. For more information on this research, including citations and links to the published studies, visit [www.afterabortion.org/news](http://www.afterabortion.org/news).

### **Detrimental Effects -- Quick-Reference Summary of Available Research**

Additional research summaries are available in the book “Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography with Commentary,” edited by Thomas W. Strahan. To order, call **Acorn Books: 1-888-412-2676**.

## Psychological Risks

### Traumatic Aftereffects of Abortion

#### Suicide

- **6 times higher suicide rate.** Two national records-based studies from Finland revealed that aborting women were 6 times more likely to commit suicide in the following year than were delivering women.<sup>1</sup>
- **Up to 60% have suicidal thoughts.** According to a recent study in a major scientific journal, 31% had thoughts of suicide after abortion. In another survey, approximately 60% of women with post-abortion problems reported suicidal thoughts, with 28% attempting suicide and half of those attempting suicide two or more times.<sup>2</sup>
- **154% higher risk of suicide.** Another study of more than 173,000 American women who had abortions or carried to term found that, during the eight years after the pregnancy ended, women who aborted had a 154% higher risk of suicide than women who carried to term.<sup>3</sup>
- **Higher suicide risks for teens.** Teen girls are 6 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last six months than girls who have not had an abortion, and 2-4 times more likely to commit suicide after abortion compared to adult women.<sup>4</sup>

#### Depression

- **65% higher risk of clinical depression.** A longitudinal study of American women revealed that those who aborted were 65% more likely to be at risk of long-term clinical depression after controlling for age, race, education, marital status, history of divorce, income, and prior psychiatric state.<sup>5</sup>
- **Depression risk remained high, even when pregnancies were unplanned.** Among a national sample of women with unintended first pregnancies, aborting women were at significantly higher risk of long-term clinical depression compared to delivering women.<sup>6</sup>

#### Trauma

- **65% report symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.** In a study of U.S. and Russian women who had abortions, 65% of U.S. women experienced multiple symptoms of PTSD, which they attributed to their abortions. Slightly over 14% reported all the symptoms necessary for a clinical diagnosis of abortion-induced PTSD, and 25% said they did not receive adequate counseling. 64% said they felt pressured by others to abort.<sup>7</sup>
- **60% said they felt “part of me died.”** In the above study, 60% of American women reported that they felt “part of me died” after their abortions.<sup>7</sup>
- **Twice as likely to be hospitalized.** Compared to women who deliver, women who abort are more than twice as likely to be subsequently hospitalized for psychiatric illness within six months.<sup>8</sup>
- **More outpatient psychiatric care.** Analysis of California Medicaid records shows that women who have abortions subsequently require significantly more treatments for psychiatric illness through outpatient care.<sup>9</sup>
- **Multiple disorders and regrets.** A study of post-abortion patients only 8 weeks after their abortions found that 44% reported nervous disorders, 36% experienced sleep disturbances, 31% had regrets about their decision, and 11% had been prescribed psychotropic medicine by their family doctor.<sup>10</sup>
- **Generalized anxiety disorder.** Among women with no previous history of anxiety, women who aborted a first, unplanned pregnancy were 30% more likely to subsequently report all the symptoms associated with a diagnosis for generalized anxiety disorder, compared to women who carried to term.<sup>11</sup>

- **Sleep disorders.** In a study of women with no known history of sleep disorders, women were more likely to be treated for sleep disorders after having an abortion compared to giving birth (nearly twice as likely in the first 180 days afterwards). Numerous studies have shown that trauma victims often experience sleep difficulties.<sup>12</sup>
- **Disorders not pre-existing.** In a New Zealand study, women had higher rates of suicidal behavior, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other disorders after abortion. The study found that these were not pre-existing problems.<sup>13</sup>

### **Eating disorders & substance abuse**

- **39% had eating disorders.** In a survey of women with post-abortion problems, 39% reported subsequent eating disorders.<sup>14</sup>
- **Five-fold higher risk of drug and alcohol abuse.** Excluding women with a prior history of substance abuse, those who abort their first pregnancy are 5 times more likely to report subsequent drug and alcohol abuse vs. those who give birth.<sup>15</sup>
- **Substance abuse during subsequent pregnancies.** Among women giving birth for the first time, women with a history of abortion are five times more likely to use drugs, twice as likely to use alcohol, and ten times more likely to use marijuana *during* their pregnancy, compared to women who have not had an abortion.<sup>16</sup>
- **Alcohol abuse linked to other problems.** Alcohol abuse after abortion has been linked to violent behavior, divorce or separation, auto accidents, and job loss.<sup>17</sup>

### **Coercion, guilt, repressed grief**

- **Coerced to violate their beliefs, values and conscience.** The “decision” to abort is often based on the demands or threats of others — even when it violates the woman’s own moral beliefs and desire to keep the baby.<sup>18</sup> This is a known risk factor for psychological complications after abortion.<sup>19</sup>
- **64% of abortions involve coercion.** A recent study of women who had abortions found that 64% of American women reported that they felt pressured by others to abort.<sup>7</sup>
- **Common negative reactions.** In a survey of women reporting post-abortion problems, 80% experienced guilt, 83% regret, 79% loss, 62% anger and 70% depression.<sup>2</sup>
- **Forbidden grief.** After abortion, societal expectation, personal shame and public and professional denial result in repressed grief, causing serious problems including clinical depression, eating disorders, self-destructive lifestyles and suicide.<sup>20</sup>

### **Divorce and chronic relationship problems**

- **Women with a history of abortion are significantly more likely to subsequently have shorter relationships and more divorces.** This may be due to lowered self-esteem, greater distrust of males, sexual dysfunction, substance abuse, and increased levels of depression, anxiety, and volatile anger.<sup>21</sup>
- **More poverty and single parenthood after repeat abortions.** Women who have more than one abortion (nearly half of those seeking abortions each year)<sup>22</sup> are more likely to become single parents and to require public assistance.<sup>23</sup>
- **30-50% of post-abortive women report experiencing sexual dysfunctions** such as promiscuity, loss of pleasure from intercourse, increased pain, and aversion to sex and/or men.<sup>23</sup>

### **Not counseled before or after the abortion, many wanted alternatives**

In a study of American and Russian women who experienced abortion:

- 67% of American women reported that they received no counseling beforehand

- 84% reported they received inadequate counseling beforehand
- 79% were not counseled about alternatives
- 54% were not sure about their decision at the time.<sup>7</sup>

### **Unresolved trauma and child abuse**

- **144 % more likely to abuse their children.** One study found that women with a history of induced abortion were 144% more likely to physically abuse their children than women who had not had an abortion.<sup>24</sup>
- **Child abuse linked to unresolved trauma.** Abortion is linked with increased violent behavior, alcohol and drug abuse, replacement pregnancies, depression, and poor maternal bonding with later children. These factors are closely associated with child abuse and would appear to confirm a link between unresolved post-abortion trauma and subsequent child abuse.<sup>25</sup>

### **Repeat abortions, self-punishment and risk factors**

- **48% of aborting women have had a previous abortion.**<sup>22</sup> Women who have had an abortion are 4 times more likely to abort a current pregnancy than those with no prior abortion history.<sup>21</sup> This may reflect aspects of self-punishment.<sup>26</sup>
- **Studies have identified factors that put women at risk for negative reactions to abortion,** including feeling pressured into unwanted abortions, lack of support, being more religious, prior emotional or psychological problems, adolescence, being unsure of her decision, and receiving little or no counseling prior to abortion. An analysis of 63 medical studies that identify risk factors concluded that the number of women suffering from negative emotional reactions could be dramatically reduced if abortion clinics screened women for these risk factors.<sup>19</sup>

To learn more, see **Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion**. To order, call: **Acorn Books: 1-888-412-2676**.

## Key Facts — Abortion's Impact

### Coercion, Trauma, Grief, Injury, Death

#### Most abortions are coerced or unwanted, based on insufficient information

**64% involve coercion.** A study published in a major international medical journal found that 64% of American women who had abortions felt pressured by others.<sup>1</sup> Coercion can include loss of home, job or family, and even violent assault.<sup>2</sup>

**Up to 83% wanted to have the baby.** In a survey of women who sought help after abortion, 83% said they would have carried to term if they had received support from the baby's father, their family, or other important people in their lives.<sup>3</sup>

**In 95% of cases, men play a central role in the decision to abort** according to a survey of women at abortion clinics.<sup>4</sup>

**Husbands and boyfriends threaten women at the clinic.** A former abortion clinic security guard testified before the Massachusetts legislature that women were routinely threatened and abused by the husbands and boyfriends who took them to the clinics to make sure they had abortions.<sup>5</sup>

**Dangerous consequences if she resists.** Coercion can escalate to violence and even murder.<sup>2</sup> Homicide is the leading killer of pregnant women.<sup>6</sup> The "Forced Abortion in America" report includes examples of molesters posing as fathers to procure cover-up abortions and women being fired, beaten, shot, stabbed, tortured or killed for refusing to abort.<sup>2</sup>

#### Not given enough information.

- 67% said they received no counseling beforehand.
- 84% reported they received inadequate counseling beforehand.
- 54% were not sure about their decision at the time, yet 79% were not counseled about alternatives.<sup>1</sup>

**Rushed into abortion.** Many women may be making hasty, ill-considered decisions for abortion, according to journal articles by the National Abortion Federation.<sup>7</sup> One in five women served by their clinics are philosophically and morally opposed to abortion.<sup>8</sup> A recent study found that 52% needed more time to make their decision.<sup>1</sup>

**Deception and sales tactics.** Many who sought answers and help, instead encountered pressure from "counselors" trained to sell abortions in profit-driven clinics.<sup>9</sup> In a survey of women experiencing problems after abortion:

- 66% said counselor's advice was very biased
- 60% were uncertain of their decision
- 44% hoped to find an alternative
- 71% felt their questions were ignored or trivialized.<sup>3</sup>

#### After Abortion

##### Health complications

- 31% suffered health complications.<sup>1</sup>
- About 10% suffer immediate complications; of which one-fifth are life-threatening. Hemorrhage, endotoxic shock and anesthesia complications are among the many potential problems.<sup>12</sup>
- Women also risk infertility or problems with future pregnancies, such as ectopic pregnancies, labor complications, miscarriages, stillbirths or premature births, the leading cause of birth defects.<sup>13</sup>

##### Trauma and suicide

- 65% suffer multiple symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>1</sup>
- 62% increased risk of death from all causes, including suicide.<sup>10</sup>
- Suicide rates are 6 times higher if women abort vs. giving birth.<sup>11</sup>
- 60% of women who had abortions said they felt that "part of me died."<sup>1</sup>

continued ▶

## **Increased awareness and declining abortion rates**

**Majority of women oppose abortion on demand.** A poll by the Center for the Advancement of Women, which supports abortion, shows more than half of American women oppose abortion on demand. Legal abortion was the next to last priority for women.<sup>14</sup>

**Abortion rates steadily dropping.** There has been a slow steady drop in abortion rates over the last 15 years, in part because of raised awareness that abortion is not a “quick and easy” solution.<sup>15</sup> 77% of Americans now realize that abortion takes a life, including one-third of those who describe themselves as strongly pro-choice.<sup>16</sup>

**Few regret keeping unintended babies.** Studies of women who sought but did not have abortions show that few, if any, later regret their decision or suffer psychological problems from having an unintended child.<sup>17</sup>

**Even in hard cases, women don't want abortion ...**

**Victims say it only intensifies the trauma.** In a survey of women who became pregnant through rape or incest, many only aborted because they felt pressured to do so and said abortion only increased their grief and trauma.

- 70% had their babies, and none regretted their decision.
- 78% of those who aborted had regrets and said that abortion was the wrong solution.<sup>18</sup>

**Petition for Hearings.** An Ad Hoc Committee of Women Pregnant by Sexual Assault has put together a Petition to Congress and State Legislators to request hearings on this issue. (For a copy of the petition, see the “Hard Cases Booklet” at [www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm)).

**Americans want more research into abortion's impact on women.** The majority of voters surveyed believe government-funded research on women's emotional reactions to abortion should be a high priority.<sup>15</sup>

## **Assembly-line medicine**

**Impersonal clinics.** More than 80% of all abortions are done in non-hospital facilities, at clinics devoted solely to providing abortions and contraceptive services. Most abortions are done by a stranger who has no relationship with the patient, either before or after the procedure. Often women do not return for post-surgical care.<sup>19</sup>

**Low standard of care.** The standard of care is often poor. Some abortionists move from state to state to avoid investigations and patient complaints.<sup>20</sup>

**Failure to screen for known risk factors. (Screening would eliminate 70% or more of all abortions.)**

Most abortionists don't screen for risk factors or determine whether abortion will benefit their patients. Proper screening would *eliminate 70% or more of all abortions.*<sup>21</sup>

**Profit-driven clinics, high-pressure “counseling.”** Many abortion “counselors” are not licensed counselors. Some are trained to “sell” abortions and ease women's concerns so they will be more likely to abort, thus increasing clinic profits.<sup>9</sup>

## **The journey toward healing**

In the U.S., over 50 million women and men have lost a child to abortion. Many are realizing they are not alone and finding that hope and healing are possible. Experts estimate that post-abortion healing programs have already served as many as 20 million women and others impacted by abortion. Learn more at [www.utheunchoice.com/healing.htm](http://www.utheunchoice.com/healing.htm).

**More information** on unwanted abortions and abortion risks can be found in the special report, “*Forced Abortion in America,*” and in our Research Booklet. Both can be downloaded for free at [www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm). For current news and updates on abortion research and risks, see [www.theunchoice.com/news.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/news.htm).

### Citations for *Recent Research* Fact Sheet

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