

Psychological Risks

Traumatic Aftereffects of Abortion

Suicide

- **6 times higher suicide rate.** Aborting women were six-seven times more likely to commit suicide in the following year than were delivering women.¹ A study of women for up to eight years after the pregnancy ended found a 2.5 times higher suicide rate after abortion than after giving birth.²
- **Up to 60% have suicidal thoughts.** In a study in a major scientific journal, 31% of women had thoughts of suicide after undergoing an abortion.³ 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.⁴

Depression

- **65% higher risk of clinical depression.** Women who aborted were 65% more likely than delivering women to be at risk of long-term clinical depression after controlling for age, race, education, marital status, income, and prior psychiatric state.⁵
- **Depression risk remained high, even when pregnancies were unplanned.** Among women with unintended first pregnancies, aborting women were at significantly higher risk of long-term clinical depression compared to delivering women.⁶

Trauma

- **65% report symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.** 65% of U.S. women who had abortions 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.³
- **60% said they felt “part of me died.”** In the above study, 60% reported that they felt “part of me died” after their abortions.³
- **More psychiatric treatment.** Compared to women who deliver, women who abort are more than twice as likely to be subsequently hospitalized for psychiatric illness within six months.⁷ Analysis of California Medicaid records shows that women who have abortions subsequently require significantly more treatments for psychiatric illness through outpatient care.⁸
- **Multiple disorders and regrets.** In a study eight weeks after abortion, 36% of women experienced sleep disturbances, 31% had regrets about the abortion, and 11% had been prescribed psychotropic medicine by their family doctor.⁹
- **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.¹⁰
- **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.¹¹
- **Disorders not pre-existing.** A New Zealand study found that 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.¹²

Eating disorders & substance abuse

- **39% had eating disorders.** In a survey of women with post-abortion problems, 39% reported subsequent eating disorders.¹³
- **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.¹⁴

continued ►

Divorce and chronic relationship problems

- **Women with a history of abortion are significantly more likely to subsequently have shorter relationships and more divorces.**¹⁶
- **More poverty and single parenthood after repeat abortions.** Women who have more than one abortion (nearly half of those seeking abortions each year¹⁷) are more likely to become single parents and to require public assistance.¹⁸
- **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.¹⁸
- **Studies have identified factors that put women at risk for negative reactions to abortion**, including feeling pressured to abort, 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.¹⁹

To find out more, including pregnancy help and post-abortion resources, visit www.unchoice.info

Citations

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