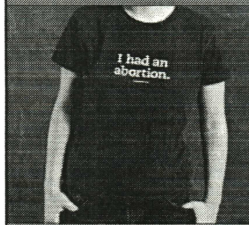


Mental Health Risks Associated with Abortion



Research suggests 10-30% of women suffer mental health problems after abortion including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance Abuse
- PTSD
- Suicidal Ideation/Attempts

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THE CONTROVERSY:

Does Elective Abortion Carry Increased Mental Health Risks Compared to Childbirth?

Affirmative:

- **Coleman (2011)**
Coleman, P. K. (2011) Abortion and mental health: quantitative synthesis and analysis of research published 1995–2009. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199, 180-186.
- **Fergusson (2013)**
Fergusson, D., Horwood, J. & Boden, J. (2011). Does abortion reduce the mental health risks of unwanted or unintended pregnancy? A re-appraisal of the evidence. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*.
- **Posavac & Miller (1990)**
Posavac, E., & Miller, T. (1990). Some problems caused by not having a conceptual foundation for health research: An illustration from studies of the psychological effects of abortion. *Psychology and Health*, 5, 13-23.
- **Rue, Speckhard, Rogers & Franz (1987)**
Rue, V., Speckhard, A., Rogers, J. & Franz, W. (1987). *The Psychosocial Aftermath of Abortion: A White Paper*. Testimony presented to Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. USDHHS, PHS, Washington, D.C.

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THE CONTROVERSY:

Does Elective Abortion Carry Increased Mental Health Risks Compared to Childbirth?

Negative:

- **American Psychological Association (2008)**
American Psychological Association Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion (2008). *Report of the APA Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion*. The American Psychological Association: Washington, DC
- **U.K. National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (2011)**
National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (2011). *Induced Abortion and Mental Health: A Systematic Review of the Mental Health Outcomes of Induced Abortion, Including their Prevalence and Associated Factors*. London: Academy of Royal Medical Colleges.
- **Charles et al. (2008)**
Charles VF, Polis CB, Sridhara SK, Blum RW (2008). Abortion and long-term mental health outcomes: a systematic review of the evidence. *Contraception* 78, 436–450.

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Meta-Analyses

Coleman (2011) BJP

- ☐ Analyzed data on 877,181 women 163,831 of whom experienced an abortion
- ☐ Women having abortion experienced an 81% increased risk of mental health problems
- ☐ Abortion carries increased risk for: anxiety disorders - 34%; depression - 37%; alcohol use/abuse - 110%; marijuana use/abuse - 220%; suicide behaviors - 155%
- ☐ Almost 10% of all mental health problems are preventable if abortion is not elected by women

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What is a Meta-Analysis?

Meta-Analyses (cont.)

Fergusson et al. (2013)

- ☐ When compared to unwanted or unintended pregnancy, abortion moderately increases risks of mental health problems
- ☐ 28% increased risk for anxiety disorders, 134% increased risk of alcohol misuse, 291% for illicit drug use/misuse and a 69% increased risk of suicidal behavior.
- ☐ no evidence to suggest that rates of mental health problems were lower in women having abortion than in comparison groups of women having unwanted pregnancy, irrespective of study quality

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