

## Mental Health Outcomes

“Common ground exists regarding the very basic fact that at least some women do have significant mental health issues that are caused, triggered, aggravated, or complicated by their abortion experience. In many cases, this may be due to feeling pressured into an abortion or choosing an abortion without sufficient attention to maternal desires or moral beliefs that may make it difficult to reconcile one’s choice with one’s self-identity.

There is also common ground regarding the fact that risk factors identifying women who are at greater risk, including a history of prior mental illness, can be used to identify women who may benefit from more pre-abortion and post-abortion counseling.”



Reardon, D. C. (2018). The abortion and mental health controversy: A comprehensive literature review of common ground agreements, disagreements, actionable recommendations, and research opportunities. *SAGE open medicine*, 6, 2050312118807624.

Analysed data collected using DSM-IV criteria from 3,310 nationally representative US women found **5.8% of suicidal ideation** and **24.7% drug use among US women** could be **related to abortion**.

Women who aborted were **3.8 times more likely to abuse drugs**, more likely to have mood and anxiety disorders and suicidal thought or actions.

Mota, N. P., Burnett, M., & Sareen, J. (2010). Associations between abortion, mental disorders, and suicidal behaviour in a nationally representative sample. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(4), 239-247.

A nationally representative US co-morbidity survey of 5,887 women found abortion to be associated with an increased risk of a variety of **mental health problems (panic attacks, panic disorder, agoraphobia, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, major depression with and without hierarchy), and substance abuse disorder** after statistical controls were instituted for a wide range of personal, situational and demographic variables.

Coleman, P. K., Coyle, C. T., Shuping, M., & Rue, V. M. (2009). Induced abortion and anxiety, mood, and substance abuse disorders: isolating the effects of abortion in the national comorbidity survey. *Journal of psychiatric research*, 43(8), 770-776.

A review of the medical records of 56,741 Californian medical patients found that women who had abortions were **160% more likely than delivering women to be hospitalized for psychiatric treatment within three months**, and remained significantly higher for at least **four years**.

Reardon, D. C., Cogle, J. R., Rue, V. M., Shuping, M. W., Coleman, P. K., & Ney, P. G. (2003). Psychiatric admissions of low-income women following abortion and childbirth. *Cmaj*, 168(10), 1253-1256.

A 25-year longitudinal study of 1,265 women born in Christchurch NZ, studied from birth to 25 years, found abortion associated with ‘...elevated rates of subsequent mental health problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviours and substance use disorders.’

Fergusson, D. M., John Horwood, L., & Ridder, E. M. (2006). Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47(1), 16-24.

Tracking over 500 New Zealand women born in Christchurch over thirty years researchers found women exposed to induced abortions were 30% more likely to have mental health problems. Rates of all forms of disorder were higher however, conditions most associated with abortion were anxiety disorders and substance use disorders.

Fergusson, D. M., Horwood, L. J., & Boden, J. M. (2008). Abortion and mental health disorders: evidence from a 30-year longitudinal study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 193(6), 444-451.

## Outpatient Psychiatric Care

Analysis of California Medicaid records show that women who have abortions subsequently require more treatments for psychiatric illness through outpatient care.

Coleman, P. K., Rue, V. M., Reardon, D. C., & Cogle, J. (2002). State-Funded Abortions Versus Deliveries: A Comparison of Outpatient Mental Health Claims Over 4 Years. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 72(1), 141-152.

## Adolescents who abort more likely to suffer mental health issues

### Unintended Pregnancies

Adolescent girls who abort compared to their peers who carried unplanned pregnancies to term:

- ↑ 5 times more likely to seek help for psychological/emotional problems
- ↑ Over 3 times more likely to report trouble sleeping
- ↑ 9 times more likely to report marijuana use

Federally funded US longitudinal study of adolescent girls who participated in two series of interviews (1995&1996).

Coleman, P. K. (2006). Resolution of unwanted pregnancy during adolescence through abortion versus childbirth: Individual and family predictors and psychological consequences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35, 903-911.

## Clinical Depression

A study of over 700 Norwegian women aged between 15 and 27, found women who aborted in their twenties were 3.5 times more likely to be depressed. Controlling for variables reduced the association but it still remained significant, at 2.9 times.

Pedersen, W. (2008). Abortion and depression: a population-based longitudinal study of young women. *Scandinavian journal of public health*, 36(4), 424-428.

Compared to women who carry their first unintended pregnancy to term, women who abort their first pregnancy are at significantly higher risk of clinical depression as measured an average of eight years after their first pregnancy.

Reardon, D. C., & Cogle, J. R. (2002). Depression and unintended pregnancy in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth: a cohort study. *BMj*, 324(7330), 151-152.

Women who reported induced abortion were 65% more likely to score in the high-risk range for clinical depression, compared to women whose pregnancies resulted in birth.

ACDEF, J. R. C., ADEFG, D. C. R., & Coleman3AcDE, P. K. (2003). Depression associated with abortion and childbirth: a long-term analysis of the NLSY cohort. *Signature*, 9(4), 164.

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## Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

'High rates of PTSD characterize women who have undergone surgical abortions (almost one fifth of the sample meet criteria for PTSD)' at three months post abortion

*Sharain Suliman et al, 'Comparison of pain, cortisol levels and psychological distress in women undergoing surgical termination of pregnancy under local anesthesia vs. intravenous sedation'. **BMC Psychiatry** 2007, 7:24.*

65% of American women who had undergone abortions reported symptoms of PTSD, which they attributed to their abortions and slightly over 14% reported all the symptoms necessary for a clinical diagnosis of PTSD.

*VM Rue et al, 'Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women'. **Medical Science Monitor**, 10:SR5-16, 2004*