



The Provincial Organization for Educational Pro-Life Groups Across Ontario

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Abortion and Subsequent Mental Health: Review of the Literature

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Some facts from the review.

- * "36 studies retrieved - six excluded for methodological bias
- * **Abortion versus childbirth** - 13 studies showed a clear risk for at least one of the reported mental problems [depression, anxiety disorders(e.g post traumatic distress disorder and substance abuse disorders)] in the abortion group versus childbirth..
- * **Abortion versus unplanned pregnancies with childbirth**; four studies found a higher risk in abortion groups, three no difference.
- * **Abortion versus miscarriage**: three studies showed a greater risk of mental disorders due to abortion, four found no difference and two found short-term anxiety and depression were higher in the miscarriage group, **while long-term anxiety and depression were present only in the abortion group.**
- * **Conclusion**, fetal loss seems to expose women to a higher risk for mental disorders than childbirth; some studies show that abortion can be considered a more relevant risk factor than miscarriage; more research is needed in this field"



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More:

* Clinical depression is present in 17% of women who give birth to a living baby **and in 26% of those who abort.**

* Depression and bi-polar disorder were present in 43.2% of women who miscarried, **in 45.5% of those who had an abortion**, 28.7% of those who gave birth and 25.1% of never pregnant women.

* ...fetal reduction is a special type of abortion, because it is balanced by the birth of the surviving fetus. Women enrolled in that study, **whose selective reduction provoked the death of all fetuses, had a depression rate of 75%**, while those who aborted (control group) had a depression of rate of 60%.

* With regard to anxiety, one study showed that 10 days after the event, 47.5% of the women who had a miscarriage had high impact of Event Scale scores, compared with 30% for women who had induced abortion. **The corresponding values after two years were 2.6% and 18.1 respectively.**

* Another study that compared term childbirth and abortion found that **after 14 months, relevant psychiatric diagnoses were present in 0% and in 16.7% of women, respectively.**

* **The studies analyzed here show that abortion is a risk factor for subsequent mental illness when compared with childbirth;** data showed that even when compared with the other two possible outcomes (miscarriage or birth of an unplanned baby) the risk is greater or similar.

* Fetal loss is traumatic

* Most studies show that abortion has a greater impact on women's health than childbearing

*..abortion seems to be even more traumatic..



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*It is true that health is more than 'mental health'; nevertheless, mental health and the risks to it after abortion cannot be disregarded, in counseling women.

* These data show that greater involvement of the national health system in clinical follow up of women who have had a fetal loss is desirable; miscarriage and elective abortion can have negative mental consequences and this should be taken into account, to follow up women who have had fetal loss.

* In particular, elective abortion is one of the most common medical interventions in the world...Thus it is important to monitor mothers who have undergone abortion, to prevent negative mental consequences....we emphasize that there is also a serious public health problem.

* It is important to consider the hypothesis that abortion is an independent risk factor for mental health, and carry out more research accordingly.

* The main restriction on the ability to arrive at a conclusion about the mental risks of abortion is the scarcity and the heterogeneity of the studies.... although a correlation between abortion and subsequent mental health seems realistic.

* Further research is needed in this field, and it necessitates large longitudinal, prospective studies assessing the numerous contextual variables and potential confounders associated with having an elective abortion, and mental health status. Future research is needed to shed light on the mechanisms linking abortion to various disorders and to decipher the characteristics of women most prone to developing a particular mental health problem."

The above is taken straight from the article for your information.

Respectfully submitted

Jakki Jeffs