

The Eye on Abortion

December 2007



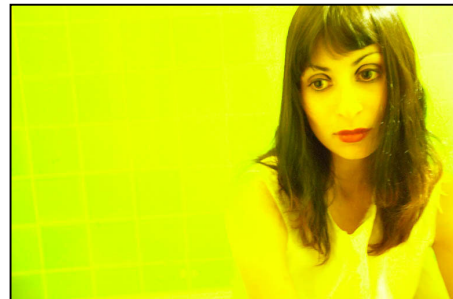
USED AND ABUSED: HOW WOMEN ARE MISTREATED BY THE ABORTION INDUSTRY PART 2

Dear Pro-life Friends,

If ever there were a cover-up, it would be the way the abortion industry (and its accomplices) stifles any legitimate studies that reveal how abortion so negatively affects women. Planned Parenthood, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, and almost every major health organization in America reject the notion that abortion causes harm to a woman's mental health.

Ask anyone who has had an abortion if it has affected her in a negative way mentally, and she will most likely tell you that it did. It doesn't take stacks of research to know that. I have spoken with some hard-core pro-aborts who have received abortions. Trying not to cry, with anger in their eyes, they claimed their abortions did not affect them negatively and that they had no regrets. Not very convincing.

Pro-abortion college students have commented to me many times saying, "No one *likes* abortion." My response has always been, "And why is that?" To which they typically replied in one form or another, "Because it is...ending the...life of the...fetus." (This, after they usually just debated with me for 10 minutes about how the unborn are *not* human!) If the unborn are not human beings then why doesn't anyone *like* abortion?



I would support abortion if it were like getting an appendix removed, or a tooth pulled, but it's not. And *everyone* knows that. That is why the existence of post-abortion syndrome is often times a very real result from abortion.

However, pro-aborts continue to assert the claim that abortion is "safe" for women, backing it up with outrageous rhetoric and unreliable studies. Last month we talked about some women who paid the ultimate price for visiting an abortion clinic by losing their lives, some of the ways Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics have failed to report rape and incest cases, and how the media is bent on defending this disgusting industry.

In this newsletter, we will focus on the mental and emotional trauma that can occur due to abortion.

WHAT IS POST-ABORTION SYNDROME?

Before we go any further, let's define our terms. Post-abortion syndrome is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. People often develop post-traumatic stress disorder after experiencing something very traumatic in their lives. In this case, that would be abortion.

In brief, some of the symptoms encountered by post-abortive women are:ⁱ

Sexual Dysfunction	Suicide Attempts or Thoughts of Suicide
Alcohol Abuse	Drug Abuse
Increased Smoking	Eating Disorders
Child Neglect or Abuse	Divorce and Chronic Relationship Problems
Repeat Abortions	Nervous Disorders
Sleep Disturbances	Regret about Abortion Decision

As you will see later, there is plenty of evidence to back up the existence of these symptoms in post-abortive women and girls. Since business would go down dramatically for Planned Parenthood if word of this got out to the public, they have to come up with a way to get around it. The way of the serpent, used way back in the Garden of Eden, is one of their favorites.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD: PUMPING OUT LIES AS TRUTH

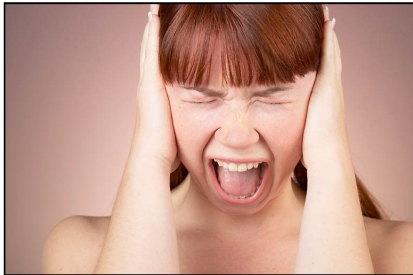
Why do I always pick on Planned Parenthood? I single them out not only because they kill the greatest number of unborn children in America, but also because they have made an art of deceiving the public. They state blatant lies as if they were truth and never even flinch. Maybe they have even talked *themselves* into believing their own lies, but it does not work on the informed pro-lifer! Let's begin by looking at what Planned Parenthood has to say about how abortion affects the mental health of women and girls.

ABORTION-THE CURE FOR BAD SELF-ESTEEM!

Not only does Planned Parenthood (PP) refuse to admit the damage abortion does to women mentally, they actually claim abortion does just the *opposite*! On PP's website, they state the following under the heading "*Abortion as a Positive Coping Mechanism*":ⁱⁱ (emphasis added)

- "For most women who have had abortions, **the procedure represents a maturing experience, a successful coping with a personal crisis situation...**"
- "Up to **98 percent of the women who have abortions have no regrets** and would make the same choice again in similar circumstances."
- "Women who have had one abortion **do not suffer adverse psychological effects**. In fact, as a group, they have **higher self-esteem, greater feelings of worth and capableness, and fewer feelings of failure than do women who have had no abortions...**"
- "The **positive relationship of abortion to well-being** may be due in part to abortion's role in controlling fertility and its relationship to coping resources."

There are SO many things that could be said about these statements that I could write the rest of my newsletter on them alone! Since I will address most of those comments in some form later in this newsletter, I will just comment on one point they *tried* to make. In the third point listed, it is **beyond belief** that they would say that if a girl receives an abortion her self-esteem will increase, she will feel more worthy, capable and like less of a failure than if she had *never received an abortion*! Now abortion is *therapeutic*! I know many women and men who have dealt with abortion, and if you do too, you realize how absurd that assertion really is! It is always one of the most raw, sensitive memories they have.



Later, in the same article on PP's website, they even go on to claim that when women are denied abortion they are more likely to have "genetically malformed children!"

And what about other options? Could there be a better option than abortion? How about adoption? PP tries to scare women away from that option by saying that most women believe it will cause them "even greater emotional trauma than abortion." Childbearing? Look out! Postpartum depression will overtake this woman for sure! This will also most likely cause her child to have "impaired mental or motor development, low self-esteem, and behavioral difficulties." Clearly, abortion is the best option according to PP.

They go on to say that if abortion *does* bring any guilt or depression, it is due to **pre-existing mental health conditions**, not because of abortion itself. But is that true? Is there no such thing as post-abortion syndrome?

ABORTION CAUSES MENTAL DISORDERS: HARD PROOF!

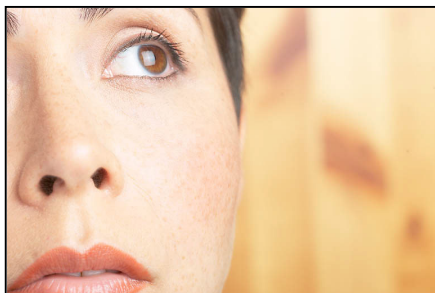
There have been several credible studies that made strong cases that abortion causes post-abortion syndrome, but one study that came out in 2005 deserves serious attention. David Reardon, the Director of the Elliot Institute, wrote a great summary of the study. The excerpts below were taken from that article (it is lengthy but highly informative!):ⁱⁱⁱ

A study in New Zealand that tracked approximately **500 women from birth to 25 years of age** has confirmed that young women who have abortions subsequently experience elevated rates of suicidal behaviors, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and other mental problems. (Emphasis added)

Most significantly, the researchers – led by Professor David M. Fergusson, who is the director of the longitudinal Christchurch Health and Development Study – found that **the higher rate of subsequent mental problems could not be explained by any pre-pregnancy differences in mental health, which had been regularly evaluated over the course of the 25-year study.** (Emphasis added)

Findings Surprise Pro-Choice Researchers

According to Fergusson, the researchers had undertaken the study anticipating that they would be able to confirm the view that any problems found after abortion would be traceable to mental health problems that had existed before the abortion. At first glance, it appeared that their data would confirm this hypothesis. The data showed that women who became pregnant before age 25 were more likely to have experienced family dysfunction and adjustment problems, were more likely to have left home at a young age, and were more likely to have entered a cohabiting relationship.



However, when these and many other factors were taken into account, the findings showed that women who had abortions were still significantly more likely to experience mental health problems. Thus, the data contradicted the hypothesis that prior mental illness or other "pre-disposing" factors could explain the differences.

"We know what people were like before they became pregnant," Fergusson told *The New Zealand Herald*. "We take into account their social background, education, ethnicity, previous mental health, exposure to sexual abuse, and a whole mass of factors."

The data persistently pointed toward the politically unwelcome conclusion that abortion may itself be the cause of subsequent mental health problems. So Fergusson presented his results to New Zealand's Abortion Supervisory Committee, which is charged with ensuring that abortions in that country are conducted in accordance with

all the legal requirements. According to *The New Zealand Herald*, the committee told Fergusson that it would be “undesirable to publish the results in their ‘unclarified’ state.”

Despite his own pro-choice political beliefs, Fergusson responded to the committee with a letter stating that it would be “scientifically irresponsible” to suppress the findings simply because they touched on an explosive political issue. (Emphasis added)

In an interview about the findings with an Australian radio host, Fergusson stated: **“I remain pro-choice. I am not religious. I am an atheist and a rationalist. The findings did surprise me, but the results appear to be very robust** because they persist across a series of disorders and a series of ages . . . Abortion is a traumatic life event; that is, it involves loss, it involves grief, it involves difficulties. And the trauma may, in fact, predispose people to having mental illness.” (Emphasis added)

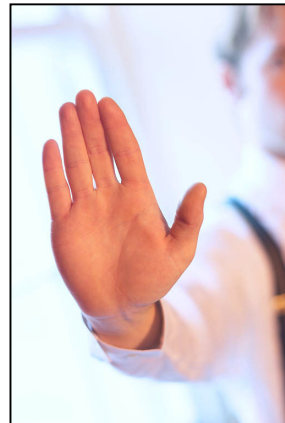
Journals Reject the Politically Incorrect Results

The research team of the Christchurch Health and Development Study is used to having its studies on health and human development accepted by the top medical journals on first submission. After all, **the collection of data from birth to adulthood of 1,265 children born in Christchurch is one of the most long-running and valuable longitudinal studies in the world.** (Emphasis added) But this study was the first from the experienced research team that touched on the contentious issue of abortion.

Ferguson said the team “went to four journals, which is very unusual for us – we normally get accepted the first time.” Finally, the fourth journal accepted the study for publication.

Although he still holds a pro-choice view, Fergusson believes women and doctors should not blindly accept the unsupported claim that abortion is generally harmless or beneficial to women.

...“This New Zealand study, with its unsurpassed controls for possible alternative explanations, confirms the findings of several recent studies **linking abortion to higher rates of psychiatric hospitalization, depression, generalized anxiety disorder, substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, poor bonding with and parenting of later children, and sleep disorders,**” he said. (Emphasis added) “It should inevitably lead to a change in the standard of care offered to women facing problem pregnancies.”



...According to Reardon, the best available medical evidence shows that it is easier for a woman to adjust to the birth of an unintended child than it is to adjust to the emotional turmoil caused by an abortion.

“We are social beings, so it is easier for people to adjust to having a new relationship in one’s life than to adjust to the loss of a relationship,” he said. “In the context of abortion, adjusting to the loss is especially difficult if there any unresolved feelings of attachment, grief, or guilt.”

...Fergusson also believes that the same rules that apply to other medical treatments should apply to abortion. “If we were talking about an antibiotic or an asthma risk, and someone reported adverse reactions, people would be advocating further research to evaluate risk,” he said in the *New Zealand Herald*. “I can see no good reason why the same rules don't apply to abortion.”

How does PP respond to this rock solid study? They say on their website that this study is flawed because, "researchers admitted to not asking subjects if they had previous psychiatric illnesses." But that makes no sense whatsoever since the subjects were followed from *birth* and researchers knew every aspect of their lives, including their "previous mental health." So I can only conclude that PP is once again lying to deny the evidence.

PP also cites The American Psychological Association's (APA) stance on abortion as proof that post-abortion syndrome does not exist. They state on their website:

"In 1989, a panel of experts assembled by the American Psychological Association (APA) concluded unanimously that **legal abortion "does not create psychological hazards for most women undergoing the procedure."** The panel noted that, since approximately 21 percent of all U.S. women have had an abortion, if severe emotional reactions were common there would be an epidemic of women seeking psychological treatment. There is no evidence of such an epidemic." (Emphasis added)

But is that the case?

OH! CONTRAIRE!

In 2003, a study was published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* that showed that evidence of increased psychological treatment among post-abortive women *does* exist. The medical records of 56,741 California Medicaid patients were reviewed, and it was revealed that **women who had abortions were 2.6 times more likely than delivering women to be hospitalized for psychiatric treatment** within 90 days following abortion or delivery. Rates of psychiatric treatment remained much higher for at least four years. The most common diagnosis was depressive psychosis.



APA-"EVIDENCE DOESN'T MATTER"

How has the APA responded to the evidence in these studies? According to the Elliot Institute, one of the world's foremost post-abortion research groups, the spokesperson for the APA, Dr. Nancy Felipe Russo, gave a shocking response to Warren Throckmorton, a columnist for the *Washington Times*. Russo said the Christchurch study (the first study cited above) would have no effect on the APA's position because, "To pro-choice advocates, mental health effects are not relevant to the legal context of arguments to restrict access to abortion." Below is more on that from the Elliot Institute:^{iv}

In the first draft of Throckmorton's column, which he sent for comment to another expert on abortion research, Dr. David Reardon of the Springfield, IL-based Elliot Institute, **Russo was quoted more bluntly, saying, "it doesn't matter what the evidence says."** (Emphasis added) Throckmorton and Russo subsequently agreed to the clarification of her statement as it appeared in the *Washington Times*.

According to Reardon, an author of several of the studies on abortion that have been ignored by the APA, Russo's statements "confirm the complaint of critics that the APA's briefs to the Supreme Court and state legislatures are really about promoting a view about civil rights, not science. Toward this end, the APA has set up task forces and divisions that include only psychologists who share the same bias in favor of abortion."

Reardon believes the APA's task forces on abortion have actually served to stifle rather than encourage research. "When researchers like Fergusson or myself publish data showing abortion is linked to mental health problems, members of **the APA's abortion policy police rush forward to tell the public to ignore our findings**

because they are completely out of line with their own 'consensus' statements which are positioned as the APA's official interpretation of the meaningful research on abortion." (Emphasis added)

Isn't the job of the APA to give reliable guidance about what is beneficial or dangerous to American's mental health? If the APA looks at the abortion issue from a political standpoint, how can they make a position statement that sounds like it is based on *science*? Is that fair to those who look to them for guidance? Here again is their official position: **legal abortion "does not create psychological hazards for most women undergoing the procedure."** When the APA refuses to accept evidence that proves abortion *is* hazardous, but make a statement claiming the opposite, that is nothing short of lying to the public. This conspiracy of misinformation is only hurting more and more women and girls who would probably like to know the truth about abortion before going through with one.

IN CONCLUSION

There is so much more that could be said about this topic, but I have to stop before this newsletter turns into a book!

After seeing what is only the tip of the iceberg of the evidence supporting the fact that post-abortion syndrome exists, I hope you have come to see that it is a very real trauma women suffer. I encourage you to visit the Elliot Institute's website at **www.afterabortion.org** and read up further on this topic. There are a myriad of other studies and articles to read there as well!

Please pray that these little known facts about abortion would become more widely known, and that women would turn away from abortion as a result! Please also keep SET in your prayers as we continue to work to battle abortion on a daily basis!

For the least of these and their parents,

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"What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor."

Psalm 8:4 -5

ⁱ Elliot Institute, *A List of Major Psychological Sequelae of Abortion*, 1997

ⁱⁱ Planned Parenthood Federation of America, *The Emotional Effects of Induced Abortion*, 2007

ⁱⁱⁱ Elliot Institute, *Abortion Causes Mental Disorders: New Zealand Study May Require Doctors to Do Fewer Abortions*, February 9, 2005

^{iv} Elliot Institute, "Evidence Doesn't Matter" – APA Spokesperson Says of Abortion Complications, February 15, 2005

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Additional material is posted at www.afterabortion.org

