Professional counselors who have worked with women who have had abortions have recognized a cluster of reactions that fit the model of a post-traumatic stress disorder, a psychological dysfunction resulting from a traumatic experience which overwhelms a person's normal healthy defense mechanisms. Some of the symptoms they have found to be typical are:

- intense fear, anxiety, sense of helplessness
- feeling of loss of control
- emotional numbing, difficulty recalling event
- guilt, pain, grief, depression
- irritability, angry outbursts, aggressive behavior
- sleep difficulties, sexual dysfunction
- flashbacks, nightmares, anniversary reactions
- withdrawal from relationships, avoidance of children
- pessimism regarding future
- drug, alcohol abuse, suicidal thoughts

Despite his promises, a woman's partner often leaves after the abortion. The clinic staff is gone, and the woman has no desire to return to the place she associates with failure. Even friends who know hesitate to bring up the subject. This means, however, that she often deals with her pain, her doubts, her questions all alone.

Abortion advocates will tell you that the most immediate emotional reaction a woman has to her abortion is one of relief — relief that the crisis is over, relief that she can get on with her life. While this may reflect her state of mind when others are urging her on and she is struggling to justify her decision in the immediate aftermath, polls and studies indicate many women end up regretting that decision in the weeks, months, or years that follow.

A 1989 Los Angeles Times survey found 56% of women who had abortions felt guilty about them, and 26% mostly regretted the abortion. Studies suggest that these numbers may be low, since negative reactions may be delayed, not surfacing for 5 or 10 years.

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REAL HUMAN COST: Studies examining the records of over 50,000 California Medicaid patients from 1989-1994 found women who aborted having 2.6 times more psychiatric admissions in the first 90 days following pregnancy than women giving birth and 17% higher mental health claims over the following four years.
Abortion’s PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS

factsheet citations National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund

Abortion’s Effects: Reproductive System

Physical Damage

Surgical abortion may harm a woman’s reproductive system, damaging her uterus or cervix, leading to future reproductive problems.\(^1\) Chemical abortions (using RU486, etc.) are bloody, painful, and dangerous,\(^2\) but the long term effects on the body are unknown.\(^3\)

Future Infertility

Women having abortions face more than a doubled risk of future sterility.\(^4\)

Later Ectopic Pregnancy

A study appearing the American Journal of Public Health in 1998 found aborting women facing a 50% increased risk of having a subsequent ectopic or tubal pregnancy. The risk was nearly twice as high (90%) for women having two or more previous abortions.\(^5\)

Future Miscarriages

Decreased cervical resistance due to forced dilation\(^6\) may result in early cervical failure and the spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) of future pregnancies.\(^7\)

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3. Read the statement of Dr. Charles Cargille, “RU 486 Long Term Health Risks for Mother and Child” delivered to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee Hearing on Mifepristone, July 19, 1996, transcript available at with Cargille’s testimony starting on p. 75.


Abortion’s PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS citations, p. 2

Future Prematurity
Premature birth is the leading cause of infant morbidity and mortality, and at least ten international studies show previous abortions significantly increases that risk.9

Infant Disability
Preterm birth is associated with lower birthweight and higher rates of cerebral palsy, often leading to physical and mental disability.11


Abortion’s PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS

PAIN

Ninety-seven percent of aborting women in one Montreal study reported pain, with 61% reporting moderate to severe pain.\(^{12}\)

U.S. researchers admit to being “surprised” at finding most women in a study of their own reporting “moderate or more discomfort” during their abortions and said they had not expected so many to report “severe pain.”\(^{13}\)

Adolescents in the Montreal study were nearly twice as likely to report severe pain as older women. In a ranking, women put abortion pain ahead of sprains, fractures, and arthritis, but about equal to cancer pain or the residual pain from an amputation.\(^{14}\) Women having drug induced abortions reported higher pain levels than those having surgical abortions.\(^{15}\)

Despite efforts by the industry to minimize abortion pain, it is an important signal that patients and doctors should heed. Pain may be a side effect of surgery or the chemical abortion process, but can also be an indicator of infection, cervical damage, uterine rupture, or an unresolved ectopic pregnancy.\(^{16}\)


\(^{16}\) Most will consider this common sense, but for those seeking a further explanation, discussion, and documentation seeChapter 9 “Pain”, in Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy and Ian Gentles Women’s Health after Abortion, 2nd Edition (Toronto: deVeber Institute, 2003), pp. 115-122.
Injury and Death

from surgical abortion
- Infection, Sepsis, Endometritis
- Cervical Lacerations
- Uterine, Bladder, or Bowel Perforations
- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease
- Incomplete Abortion, Retained Tissue

from chemical abortion
- severe pain, cramping, nausea, diarrhea
- hemorrhage, infection, ruptured undiagnosed ectopic

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24. Multiple sources, listed and documented in NRL ETF factsheet “RU486: Risks & Dangers” available at http://.

25. In addition to factsheet mentioned above, see NRL ETF factsheet “Deaths Associated with RU486,” at http://.
Abortion’s PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS

Abortion Related Causes of Death

Anesthesia
Infection
Hemorrhage
Ruptured Ectopic Pregnancy
Embolism

There have been over 350 identified deaths from legal abortion in the U.S. since 1972.


Abortion’s PHYSICAL COMPLICATIONS

Abortion’s Link to Breast Cancer

Pregnancy & Normal Breast Development

In pregnancy, as estrogen levels elevate, immature milk glands, or lobules, begin to grow and differentiate, reaching maturity around 32 weeks. By birth, the lobules are fully formed and ready for milk production. That is why a full term pregnancy is known to lower a woman’s long term risk of breast cancer.

Abortion Interrupts Breast Development

Abortions, which typically occur in the first or early second trimester, interrupt the process of breast development while estrogen is still surging, urging growth, but before full differentiation has taken place. Thus, the risk-lowering effect of full term pregnancy is lost. Even worse, lobules stuck in this growth stage are susceptible to replication defects, which may eventually manifest themselves as cancers.

Scientific Evidence of Abortion’s Impact

Thirteen out of 17 studies in the U.S. reported more breast cancer among women who chose abortion. A 1996 meta-analysis of all published reports on the incidence of induced abortion and breast cancer appearing in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found, on average, a 30% increased risk.

Link to Other Cancers

Abortion has also been associated with higher rates of cervical and ovarian cancer.

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33. The most detailed and up to date information on the abortion breast link may be found at the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute website, www.bcpinstitute.org and the website of the Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer as www.abortionbreastcancer.com. Most of the material cited below may be found on these sites, but with more explanation and detail.


