

ABORTION FACTS

Since 1973, legal abortions in the United States total over 57 million.¹ From 1973 through 2011, abortions have occurred at an average daily rate of 3,844. Over 93% of legal abortions are done primarily for social reasons, and only about 7% primarily for physical reasons (sometimes self-diagnosed) like threat to the mother's life, fetal deformity, rape or incest.²

The American woman's womb has been legally declared a free-fire zone by the Supreme Court's January 22, 1973 rulings. These rulings allow abortion up to the moment of birth for virtually any reason.³ The rulings were based on legal, historical, medical and social falsehoods.⁴

Although 91.4 % of legal abortions are done within the first 13 weeks of gestation, the remaining 8.6% equals 91,031 of the 1,058,500 legal abortions reported for 2011, a daily rate of 249 done after the first trimester, with 41 of these per day being done at or after 21 weeks of gestation, when the fetus is likely to be viable.⁵

In 2011, of those women having legal abortions:

- 85.5% were unmarried
- 37.2 % were white, 36.2% were black, 19.7% were Hispanic, and 7.0% were other races
- 46.4% were having a second or higher order abortion⁶
- 46-60% admitted they were not using contraceptives when they conceived⁷

In the first 38 years (1973-2011) after Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the maternal death toll from induced abortion was:

- 421 (85.9%) from legal abortion
- 56 (11.4%) from illegal abortion
- 13 (2.7%) from abortions whose type was unknown⁸

Three separate studies have shown that the CDC underreports maternal abortion deaths by 30% to 419%. Its coding system makes it difficult to accurately attribute maternal deaths to legal abortion.⁹

Because of a 1976 Supreme Court ruling, a minor child can have an abortion without her parents' involvement. Some 38 states have since passed laws which are in force to remedy this situation, although a judicial bypass can still keep parents in the dark in many cases. It is the parents' moral, legal, and financial responsibility, of course, to deal with any mental or physical trauma sustained by their daughter as a result of her secret abortion.

The best estimate of the total induced abortions (legal + illegal) occurring in 1966, the last year before the abortion movement began having legislative impact, is 125,000.¹⁰ Since permissive laws began to be passed in 1967, therefore, induced abortions have increased 10 to 12 fold. The number of maternal deaths due to abortions of all types (legal, illegal and spontaneous) in 1966 was 189.¹¹ By 1972, the year before Roe v. Wade, it had decreased to 90.¹² The idea that prior to Roe v. Wade thousands of women died each year from abortion is a myth. It is also a myth that abortion is safer for the woman than childbirth.¹³

When valid questions have been asked, poll data indicate that a majority of Americans have never supported the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade policy of abortion on demand throughout the nine months of pregnancy.¹⁴

The abortion debate has politicized social science and history. Claims that English Common Law recognized a right to abortion before and after our country's founding, and that the fetus' right to life was of little concern in early law are inaccurate. The same is true of the claim that the main reasons for passing abortion laws in the 1800s were to protect the health of women, to enhance the medical profession's status, to enforce gender roles, and to respond to new waves of immigration. While some of these motives played some role in the initiation of 19th century laws, a main reason was the desire to protect human life from conception, a biological process better understood after the discovery of the mammalian ovum in 1827. Abortion was a relatively safe procedure during this period, at least as far as short-term effects are concerned. (See endnotes 15-20).

Research over the last five decades has shown that legal abortion has several long-term negative effects on women's health. For example:

Seventy-nine percent of 70 studies of women in Asia, Europe, Australia and the U.S. find **a link between abortion and an increased risk of breast cancer**.²¹ Lifetime risk of abortion for the average American woman has increased from 1 in 12 in 1970 to 1 in 7 in 2006, the period when abortion became increasingly available. One study found breast cancer rates in the U.S. climbed more than 40% between the mid-1980s and 1998. Only the women under 40 in the study (Roe v. Wade being passed in their fertile years) experienced an increase in breast cancer rates.²²

Similarly, **ectopic pregnancies** increased almost fourfold between 1970-1989, corresponding to the increase in abortions. These pregnancies were associated with 13% of maternal deaths during this time.²³ More than 120 studies find induced **abortion increases the incidence of prematurity and low birth weight in subsequent pregnancies**.²⁴ Prematurity is associated with increased infant deaths and incidence of childhood diseases, such as cerebral palsy. Subsequent miscarriage is also associated with abortion.

A comprehensive analysis of 22 of the world's best large studies of **abortion's impact on women's mental health** found that legal abortion was associated with the following increase in risks: anxiety disorders 34%, depression 37%, alcohol use/abuse 110%, marijuana use/abuse 220%, and suicide behaviors 155%.²⁵ David C. Reardon et al. found that women who had state-funded abortions in California were 2.5 times more likely to die of suicide than those who had given birth.²⁶ A study of a nationally representative sample of U.S. women found that those having an abortion were 51% more likely to have attempted suicide than those not having an abortion.²⁷

These data clearly indicate that abortion is not "reproductive health care," but rather, anti-reproductive health endangerment. The one reproduced is killed and his/her mother's physical and psychological health and that of her subsequent children is endangered.

Finally, each of us was a human zygote, embryo and fetus at one stage in our life, just as we were infants, children and adolescents later on. The life of an individual human being begins at fertilization, when sperm joins egg. The question, then, is: Should we allow some human beings to kill other human beings to solve personal or social problems, or should we seek solutions which enhance the lives of all, born and unborn?

Endnotes

1. Rachel K. Jones and Jenna Jermann, "Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United States, 2011," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 46:1 (March, 2014) online. See also Raymond J. Adamek, "Incidence of Induced Abortion in the United States," Fact Sheet available from Right to Life of Northeast Ohio.
2. Lawrence B. Finer, et al. "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37:3 (September, 2005) 110-118.
3. *United States Supreme Court Reports* 35L Ed 2d, pp. 183-184, 212-213.
4. See Justin Dyer, "Fictional Abortion History," www.nationalreview.com (December 24, 2012) 1-6 (Online); Susan E. Wills, "Abortion History Myths: The Sequel," www.nationalrighttolife.org (December 26, 2012) and two items available from Right to Life of Northeast Ohio by Raymond J. Adamek, "Roe v. Wade: A Bad Decision Yields Terrible Consequences," and "Roe v. Wade: A Faulty Legal Decision."
5. Percentage of abortions by gestational age from Karen Pazol, et al. "Abortion Surveillance --- United States, 2011," *MMWR* (November 28, 2014) 63 (SS 11) (Online)
6. Pazol, et al., (2014), Tables 12, 17, and 19. (See complete citation in endnote 5).
7. See *Family Planning Perspectives* 13:5 (Sept./Oct. 1981) 218-221; 14:2 (March/April 1982) 98-99, 20:4 (July/Aug. 1988) 158-168, and *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 40:1 (1998) 6-16.
8. Pazol, et al., (2014) Table 24. (See complete citation in endnote 5).
9. See K. Sherlock, *Victims of Choice* Akron, OH: Brennyman Books, 1966, Mark Crutcher *Lime 5* Denton, TX: Life Dynamics, 1996, and David C. Reardon et al., "Deaths Associated with Abortion Compared to Childbirth," *Journal of Contemporary Health Law & Policy*, 20:2 (2004) 279-327.
10. Cynthia McKnight, *Life Without Roe* Washington, D.C. Horatio R. Storer Foundation, 1992, and *The Effects of Changes in State Abortion Laws* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1971, p. 4.
11. National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the U.S. 1966*, Vol. II *Mortality*, Part A, Washington, D.C. 1968, pp. 1-40.
12. Centers for Disease Control, "Abortion Surveillance – United States, 1984-1985," *MMWR* (Sept. 1989) 38 (SS-2) p. 43.
13. Priscilla K. Coleman, David C. Reardon and Byron C. Calhoun, "Reproductive History Patterns and Long-Term Mortality Rates: a Danish, Population-Based Record Linkage Study," *The European Journal of Public Health*, doi:10.1093/eurpub/cks107 (September 5, 2012) 1-6, and the Reardon citation in endnote 9 above.
14. Raymond J. Adamek, *Thirty-Plus Years of Abortion Polls: What Have We Learned?* New York: The Ad Hoc Committee, 2002, and R. J. Adamek, "American Public Opinion Regarding Late Term Abortion" S. Euclid, OH: Human Family Research Center, 2/1/2011.
15. Robert M. Byrn, "An American Tragedy: The Supreme Court on Abortion," *Fordham Law Review* 41 (May, 1973) 807-862, especially 814-835.
16. Robert A. Destro, "Abortion and the Constitution: The Need for a Life-Protective Amendment," *California Law Review* 63 1250-1351, especially 1267-1282.
17. Thomas W. Hilgers and Dennis .J. Horan, *Abortion and Social Justice* N.Y.: Sheed & Ward, 1972, especially 120-127, 301-313.

18. Stephen M. Krason and William B. Hollberg, "The Law and History of Abortion: The Supreme Court Refuted," in J. Douglas Butler and David F. Walbert (eds.) *Abortion, Medicine and the Law* (3rd edition) N.Y.: Facts on File, 1986, 196-225.
19. James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America* N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978, especially 18-19, 30-31, 65, 164-166, 173-174.
20. Ramesh Ponnuru, "Aborting History," *The Human Life Review* 22:1 (Winter, 1996) 35-42.
21. Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer, www.AbortionBreastCancer.com Search "Epidemiological Studies."
22. H.L. Howe, et al. "Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, 1973-1998, Featuring Cancers with Increasing Trends," *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* 93 (2001): 824-842.
23. Tatiana E. Goldner, et al. "Surveillance for Ectopic Pregnancy—United States, 1970-1989," *MMWR* Vol. 42, No. SS-6, (December 17, 1993).
24. Byron Calhoun, "Abortion and Preterm Birth: Why Medical Journals Aren't Giving Us the Real Picture," International Organizations Research Group, Briefing Paper No. 9 (April 28, 2012).
25. Priscilla K. Coleman, "Abortion and Mental Health: Quantitative Synthesis and Analysis of Research Published 1995-2009," *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199 (2012) 180-186. On line: doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.077230.
26. David C. Reardon, et al. "Deaths Associated with Pregnancy Outcome: A Record Linkage Study of Low Income Women," *Southern Medical Journal* 95:8 (August, 2002):834-841.
27. Natalie P. Mota, et al. "Associations Between Abortion, Mental Disorders, and Suicidal Behavior in a Nationally Representative Sample," *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55:4 (April, 2010): 239-246.

For more documentation of the physical and psychological effects of abortion on women's health, see "Legal Abortion Harms Women," available from Right to Life of Northeast Ohio, (330) 762-2785 or RighttoLifeofNortheastOhio.com. See also Angela Lanfranchi et al. *Complications: Abortion's Impact on Women* Toronto: The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research, 2013.

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Updated 1/7/15