

Myths and Facts About Abortion

There are many myths circulating in our society about the effect of abortion on women's emotional and physical health.

Here are the facts about some of the myths, which we hear most often.

Abortion Affects Future Fertility

Safe, legal abortion performed by qualified staff is very rarely associated with any future risk to fertility.

Most women return to their pre pregnancy fertility immediately following the abortion procedure.

A small number of women have a delay in the return of normal menstrual cycles.

We recommend use of contraception as soon as women resume sexual activity after the abortion.

For information about contraception

www.shinesa.org.au

Abortion Causes Breast Cancer

A link between termination of pregnancy and breast cancer is being promoted by some groups in Australia and internationally. Such a claim is not supported by scientific evidence and only serves to cause unnecessary distress amongst women.

Around the world, reproductive health and anti-cancer organisations have rejected any association between abortion and an increased risk of breast cancer. This rejection is based on scientific investigation. A collaborative analysis of data from 53 studies reported in the March 2004 edition of the journal Lancet that, " Worldwide epidemiological evidence indicates that pregnancies ending as either spontaneous

(miscarriage) or induced abortions do not have adverse effects on women's subsequent risk of developing breast cancer."

www.childrenbychoice.org.au/nwww/myth.htm

The factors for increased risk and incidence of breast cancer in Australia are complex and varied. The main risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and being over 50.

For more information go to
www.cancersa.org.au

Abortion Causes Emotional Harm

Unplanned pregnancy does cause emotional distress for some women - however research shows that for most women abortion causes no long lasting psychological consequences. The study We Women Decide: women's experience of seeking abortion in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania 1985 1992, by Drs Ryan, Ripper and Buttfield found that women who made their own decision about abortion were likely to find it a health enhancing experience. Women also demonstrated there is nothing inherently traumatic about abortion, however, every step of the process of accessing abortion services can be made traumatic by judgemental or undermining treatment by others.

Studies do inform us about risk factors, which can increase the likelihood of a woman experiencing longer lasting emotional distress;

- women who did not make their own decision
- Women who have been or felt coerced into having an abortion
- women who hold strong cultural or religious belief that abortion is wrong

A consistent opinion has emerged within the medical profession and extensive searches of Health and Social Science databases reveals that the psychological effects of abortion are benign or positive and that serious adverse effects are rare. None of these articles conclude there is any evidence to support the term nor condition 'Post Abortion Syndrome'.

Women Use Abortion Instead of Contraception

Abortion is a safe method of birth control and used by women when use of contraception fails or other factors that make using contraception difficult occurs.

The majority of women experiencing unplanned pregnancy are using some form of contraception - however we know that:

- All modern methods of contraception have some associated risks
- Finding suitable contraception is very difficult for some women
- No form of contraception is 100% effective
- Sexual behaviour is not always consensual or predictable

A useful link for information about contraception
www.shinesa.org.au

Myth

Adoption is better than abortion.

Fact

This view claims that since there are so few children available for adoption then women with unwanted pregnancies should be encouraged to relinquish their offspring for adoption. For many women the choice to have an abortion is because they do not want to be pregnant, or continue to be pregnant, or to give birth or to relinquish a baby. A number of women who were interviewed in the We Women Decide study had relinquished a baby for adoption and they invariably spoke of the pain and ongoing feelings about this decision and contrasted it with their lack of regret following abortion.

It is not women's role / obligation to produce / supply babies for other women/men who wish to pursue adoption.

Myth

Only young and / or irresponsible women choose abortion

Fact

Women of all ages in their fertile years approx. 12yrs to 45+ yrs of age have decided to have an abortion throughout the centuries for many different and similar reasons. The belief that only irresponsible women choose abortion suggests that 'real' women are selfless and nurturing above all other costs and an 'aborting' woman is wilful, careless, promiscuous and selfish in not accepting their biological destiny.

The only consistent finding of the many studies conducted about women's experience of abortion suggests that the only common characteristic of these women is that they had sex with a man! Women of all ages, (with or without children), occupations, religions, educational levels, contraceptive practices, and marital status seek abortions.

Facts about other myths can be found at:

www.childrenbychoice.org.au/nwww/myth.htm



PREGNANCY ADVISORY CENTRE

Myths and Facts About Abortion

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