The Detrimental Effects of Adolescent Abortion

In both Canada and the United States, about 20 percent of all abortions today are performed on teens. Teenage abortion has been linked to a number of physical and psychological problems, including higher rates of endometritis, intrauterine adhesions, PID, cervical incompetence, subsequent miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies, rupture of the uterus and death. In addition, dilation and extraction abortions, frequently used in the second trimester, are associated with low birth weight in later pregnancies, which can cause various health and development problems for the baby, including cerebral palsy. 11

Complications of Late Term Abortions continued...

Late-term abortions, and all of the factors related to ambivalence such as delay, concealment of pregnancy, and feeling pressure to abort are significantly associated with more severe emotional and psychological problems after abortion. 30 Teens who abort in the second and third trimester also face greater risk of physical complications, including higher rates of endometritis, intrauterine adhesions, PID, cervical incompetence, subsequent miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies, rupture of the uterus and death. In addition, dilation and extraction abortions, frequently used in the second trimester, are associated with low birth weight in later pregnancies, which can cause various health and development problems for the baby, including cerebral palsy. 30

Conclusion

As shown in this brief literature review, numerous studies have found that, compared to older women, younger women, especially adolescents, are at significantly higher risk of physical and psychological complications following abortion. This information is not generally known by the public and certainly not by parents who can pressure their daughters into abortions. In many of these cases, the parents, truly believe they are helping to protect their daughter’s future. They are not aware that they are subjecting her to physical and psychological trauma that will forever scar her for life.

For more information on the detrimental effects of adolescent abortion go to: www.afterabortion.org. If you, or someone you know, is suffering from an abortion experience call 1-800-385-3850 or 1-800-665-0570 for a referral or to receive confidential, compassionate help to healing and recovery.

Special thanks to Amy R. Sobe and David C. Reardon, Ph.D. who compiled the research.

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The Psychological Risks

Compared to women who have abortions in adulthood, teens who abort:

- Are two to four times more likely to commit suicide.
- Are more likely to develop psychological problems.
- Are more likely to have troubled relationships.
- Are generally in need of more counseling and guidance regarding abortion.
- Are nearly three times more likely to be admitted to mental health hospitals than women in general.

Studies have shown that the major factors in pregnancy decision-making among teens are the attitude of the teen’s parent, the baby’s father, and her peers; the personality of the teen herself; and the cultural and public policy attitudes toward abortion by which she is surrounded.

Compared to older women, teens are more likely to abort because of pressure from their parents or sexual partners, putting them at higher risk for adverse effects after abortion.

Replacement Pregnancies

Another study found less than one-fourth of teens were able to achieve a healthy psychological adaptive process after their abortions, and many continued to reenact their trauma through a cycle of repeat pregnancies and abortions. This increased risk is thought to be due to the fact that teens have smaller cervixes which are more likely to dilate or grasp instruments.

Younger women have a more difficult time adjusting to their abortions. One study found that teenagers who had abortions were more likely to report severe nightmar- es following abortion and to score higher on scales measuring anti-social traits, paranoia, drug abuse and psychotic delusions than older aborters.

Studies have shown that young women who have had PID previously or who had a previous full-term birth are more vulnerable to post-abortion infections. In addition, because teens are less likely than adults to take prescribed antibiotics or follow other regimens for the treatment of medical problems such as infection, they are at greater risk for infertility, hysterectomy, ectopic pregnancy and other serious complications.

Because teens are more likely to abort their first pregnancy, they face other risks as well. For instance, research has shown an early full-term birth can reduce a woman’s risk of breast cancer, but induced abortion of a first pregnancy carries a 30 to 50 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, aborting teens lose the protective effect of having a full-term pregnancy at a younger age, which reduces breast cancer risk.

The Physical Risks

Complications of Late-Term Abortions

The Centers for Disease Control have reported that 30% of teenagers who were pregnant have become pregnant again within two years. One study found that, on average, 9% of teens who have repeat pregnancies are a symptom of young women “acting out” unresolved abortion issues and the desire to “disprove” the medical pregnancy with another child. Unfortunately, “replacement babies” are often aborted because the woman faces the same pressure as she did the first time, and sometimes even more. Sometimes a teen who has been especially traumatized will choose abortion as a form of self-punishment or as an unconscious attempt to resolve trauma by continually repeating it. In other cases, she may be hoping to continue her pregnancy but will feel pressured by her parents or partner to submit to an abortion as “what is best for everyone.”

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CITATIONS:

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