

Abortion and Mental Health

Anguish, Anxiety, Addiction:



4800 Jonestown Rd., Suite 102 • Harrisburg, PA 17109-1741 • 717-541-0034 • www.paprolife.org

For additional copies, contact us at 717-541-0034 or visit www.paprolife.org.

Research is proving that abortion is so traumatic that it can bring about multiple and serious mental health problems. As we learn more, it's becoming clearer that what pro-life advocates have long held is true — *abortion not only kills babies but also hurts women.*

One study, completed in November 2008, looked into the connection between a woman's abortion history and a wide range of anxiety, mood, and substance abuse disorders.



Dr. Priscilla Coleman

The study was conducted by a team of researchers led by Dr. Priscilla Coleman, professor of human development at Bowling Green State University. It used a nationally representative sample of U.S. women, and was presented in the distinguished *Journal of Psychiatric Research*.

Abortion was found to be directly related to an increased risk of panic attacks, panic disorder, agoraphobia, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, and substance abuse disorders. The number of cases of mental health issues rose by as much as 17 percent overall in women having abortions compared to those who didn't. What's more, the risks for each particular mental health problem increased by 145 percent in post-abortive women.

- ▶ **ANXIETY DISORDERS.** *Post-abortive women were found to have an:*
 - **111%** increased risk for panic disorder
 - **44%** increased risk for panic attacks
 - **55%** increased risk for post-traumatic stress disorder
 - **95%** increased risk for agoraphobia
 - **93%** increased risk for agoraphobia with panic disorder

- ▶ **MOOD DISORDERS.** The experience of an abortion was found to put women at increased risk of various mood disorders. *For example, post-abortive women experienced a:*
 - **167%** increased risk of developing bipolar disorder
 - **45%** increased risk of depression

- ▶ **SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS.** Women who had gone through an abortion were more likely to develop addiction problems. *The study found a:*
 - **120%** increased risk for alcohol abuse with or without drug dependence
 - **145%** increased risk for dependence on alcohol
 - **79%** increased risk of drug abuse
 - **126%** increased risk of dependence on drugs

The study also found that the trauma of abortion has a particularly devastating effect on women. Abortion made a greater negative impact on mental health than rape, sexual abuse or neglect in childhood, or physical assault in adulthood.

Further, the study found that induced abortion is more traumatic for women than miscarriage. These traumas had an independent effect on just 4 of the 15 psychiatric illnesses examined, unlike abortion, which impacted all the psychiatric illnesses studied.

The evidence is clear. Abortion causes untold emotional trauma that can last for years or an entire lifetime. Join with the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation and help us educate and inform Pennsylvanians about abortion and its devastating consequences.

