

## New Report from Guttmacher Adds Little to Abortion Debate

Mark Adams

May 3, 2006

Officials from the Guttmacher Institute are claiming their new report on abortion uses the latest data to show how "three decades of legal abortion have brought broad benefits to women" but pro-life advocates who have reviewed the report say it is full of rehashed statistics and recycled arguments.

May 3, 2006

Volume 3, Number 39

By Mark Adams

Officials from the Guttmacher Institute are claiming their new report on abortion uses the latest data to show how "three decades of legal abortion have brought broad benefits to women" but pro-life advocates who have reviewed the report say it is full of rehashed statistics and recycled arguments.

According to Rebecca Wind, a spokesperson for the Guttmacher Institute, the report also "debunks false claims about the harmful effects of abortion on physical and psychological health." Yet the report contains no systematic debunking of any research and ignores notable studies.

The Guttmacher Institute is the research arm of Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider. Cathy Cleaver Ruse, Senior Fellow for Legal Studies at the Family Research Council, says that report contains the same claims that have been made by the pro-abortion side for years. The report, she said, is largely based on the same data and the same research they have been referencing for years. "The pro-life movement must be experiencing significant success for the Guttmacher Institute to create an entirely new document to spin its own old data," she said. "Clearly the voices of post-abortive women and campaigns like Women Deserve Better are having an effect on the debate."

In its section on the long term safety of abortion, the report aims to debunk all scientific claims that abortion harms the health of women. It cites studies that back up its claims that abortion does not impair fertility, cause breast cancer, or cause depression and other mental illnesses. Other studies that contradict those findings are all summarily dismissed in the report as methodologically flawed.

In addressing whether or not a link between abortion and breast cancer exists the report asserts, "Abortion opponents seized upon a 1996 analysis, which combined the results of multiple studies and reported that women who had had an abortion had a significantly elevated risk of breast cancer. Other researchers and medical groups, however, found this study to be flawed, largely because the data were



CULTURE of LIFE  
FOUNDATION®

1413 K Street NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: 202-289-2500  
Fax: 202-289-2502  
info@culture-of-life.org  
www.culture-of-life.org

# Briefs

collected only after breast cancer had been diagnosed." But Dr. Joel Brind, the author of the 1996 study, told Culture & Cosmos that Guttmacher has it wrong. "In fact, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in the UK, said, in their clinical guideline for abortion practitioners: "The Brind paper had no major methodological shortcomings and could not be disregarded," Brind said.

The report also asserts, "Each time the question of the psychological impact of abortion has been extensively examined . . . leading experts have concluded that there is no evidence to support a connection" between abortion and mental illness. It further asserts that, "Well-designed studies . . . continue to find no causal relationship between abortion and mental health problems." But the report makes absolutely no mention of a recent study out of New Zealand that examined a group of 500 girls from birth to age 25. The study, authored by a pro-choice atheist, found a definitive link between abortion and depression even after accounting for previous mental illnesses and other environmental factors.



**CULTURE of LIFE  
FOUNDATION®**

1413 K Street NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: 202-289-2500  
Fax: 202-289-2502  
info@culture-of-life.org  
www.culture-of-life.org