

THE LOST MALE PARTNER IN THE POST ABORTION EXPERIENCE

Taylor Summers, Susan Piras, and Dolores Bowman

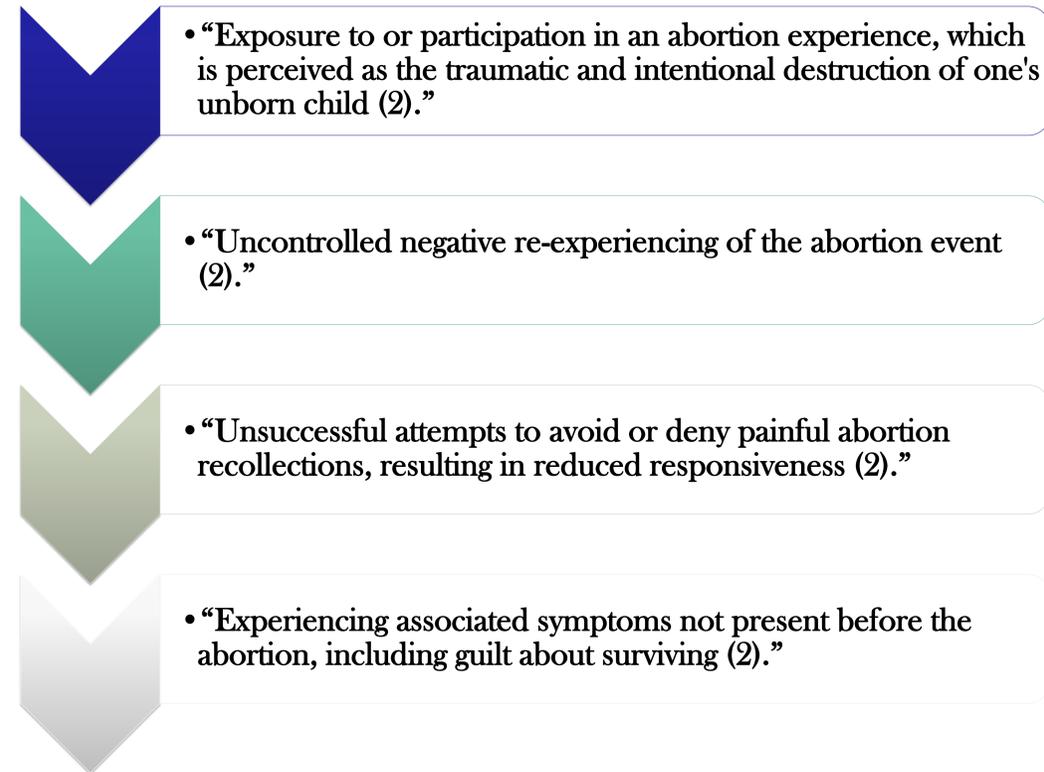
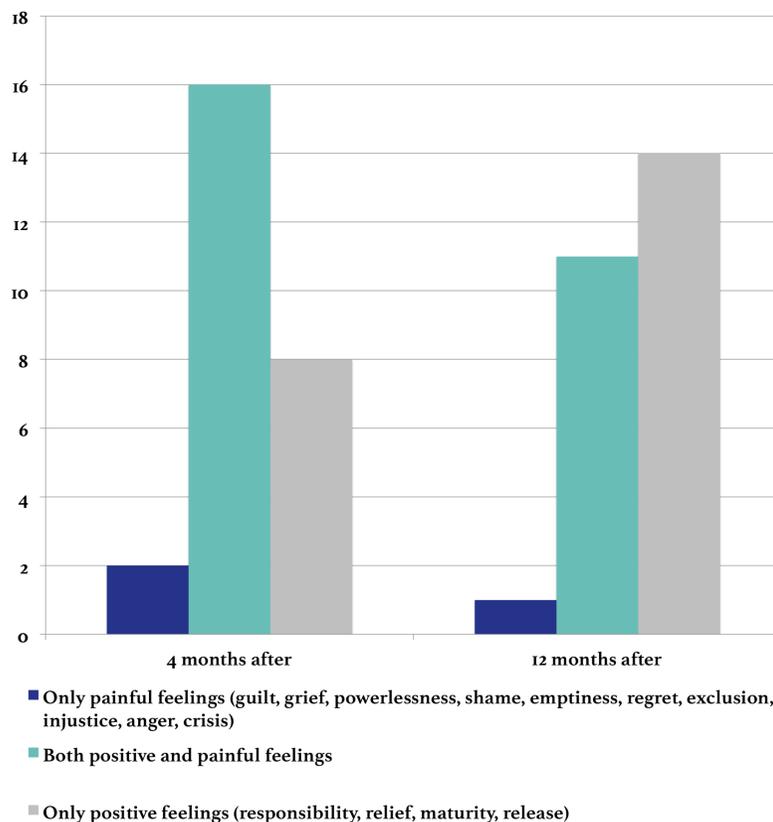


Introduction

- Approximately one in four women in the US have an abortion.
- Recent studies addressing the post abortion period have documented the involved parties re-experiencing the abortion, avoiding pain caused by the event or developing feelings of guilt or anxiety.
- These symptoms are termed post abortion syndrome.
- There is an abundance of literature surrounding post abortion syndrome experienced by the woman; however, the literature is slowly recognizing the effects of abortion on the male partner.

Coverage

- Literature used from this review pertains to the effects of abortion on men post procedure. Particularly, their psychological experiences for months after their partners' elective abortions.



Methodology

- When searching for terms to find articles related to the experience of men post abortion, Coyle explored phrases like, “men and abortion”, “fathers and abortion”, “male sexuality and abortion”, etc.
- The rest of the studies surveyed the participants either in groups or in a case study at different points after their partners’ abortions, up to 12 months.

Results

- Nearly fifty percent of men in a longitudinal study experienced relief and happiness with their partners’ decisions to abort, when surveyed at four and twelve months post abortion (3).
- In a case study addressing one male’s experience after discovering his partner had an elective abortion, the participant voiced feelings of “voicelessness and worthlessness.” It was recommended that male partners be offered counseling resources post abortion in addition to the female (4).
- A literature review of men’s experiences surrounding abortion largely evaluated the subjects during or twelve months after the abortion experience and discovered a spectrum of feelings from relief to grief and sadness (5).

Significance

- In addition to the robust data from the literature, we interviewed a local clinical expert in the field, the expert stated that post abortion syndrome signs and symptoms were not commonly observed until five to ten years post abortion.
- If these men are experiencing a syndrome that mimics depression or PTSD, it is important that they are provided with counseling and mental health resources at the time of the abortion to prevent these mental illnesses five or ten years down the road.

Conclusion

- The existing longitudinal research needs to be further expanded to allow for a post abortion syndrome timeline equivalent to what experts witness in the field.
- Once adequate longitudinal research is performed, adequate psychological resources need to be provided.

References

1. Jones, R. K., & Jerman, J. (2017). Population group abortion rates and lifetime incidence of abortion: United States, 2008-2014. *Am J Public Health, 107*(12), 1904-1909. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2017.304042
2. Speckhard, A. C. and Rue, V. M. (1992), Postabortion Syndrome: An Emerging Public Health Concern. *Journal of Social Issues, 48*: 95-119. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1992.tb00899.x
3. Kero A, Lalos A. Reactions and reflections in men, 4 and 12 months post abortion. *J Psychosom Obstet Gynaecol* 2004; 25(2): 135-143.
4. Holmes MC. Reconsidering a "woman's issue:" psychotherapy and one man's postabortion experiences. *Am J Psychother* 2004; 58(1): 103-115.
5. Catherine T. Coyle: Men and Abortion: A Review of Empirical Reports Concerning the Impact of Abortion on Men: *The Internet Journal of Mental Health*. 2007; Volume 3, Number 2.