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New Review Links Abortion to Higher Risk of Preterm Birth

Dozens of Studies Find Women With a History of Abortion More Likely to Later Have a Preterm Birth

Researchers studying findings from dozens of studies have concluded that abortion is linked to an increased risk of preterm birth among subsequently born babies.

In a paper recently published in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, a Canadian research team examined data from 37 studies and found that having a prior abortion increased the risk of subsequent preterm birth by 35 percent, while having more than one prior abortion increased the risk by 93 percent.¹ (Preterm birth is defined as a birth that takes place before 37 weeks gestation.)

In other words, children whose mothers had a previous abortion were more likely to be born prematurely, putting them at greater risk for problems such as low-birth weight (which has been linked to physical and developmental problems), epilepsy, autism, mental retardation² and cerebral palsy. A research team looking at data from 2002 estimated that prior abortions led to 1,096 cases of cerebral palsy among babies born prematurely that year.³

There are risks to the mother with preterm birth as well, as other studies have found that women who give birth at less than 32 weeks double their lifetime risk of breast cancer.⁴

Evidence linking abortion and preterm birth continues to pile up, researchers and advocates say. Another paper published earlier this year found that having a previous abortion raised a woman's relative odds of having a subsequent birth at less than 32 weeks by 64 percent.⁵

Further, as far back as 2006 the Institute of Medicine included "prior first trimester abortion" on a list of risk factors associated with premature birth.⁶ However, as Brent Rooney, Director of Research for the Reduce Preterm Birth Coalition, has pointed out, abortions continue to be performed despite the strong evidence of risks—and in the absence of any evidence showing the procedure to be harmless.

"In the 'Court of Medicine' a 'defendant' new surgery or new drug is presumed guilty of serious adverse side effects until by strong evidence it is demonstrated to be innocent," Rooney noted in a news release. Yet 50 years after the development of the suction abortion procedure, he said, there has never been a "study of studies" or systematic review" that has proven that abortion does not cause premature birth. Instead, the evidence seems to be pointing in the opposite direction.

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Learn more: Access the world's most extensive online library of studies on the physical and psychological effects of abortion at [www.AbortionRisks.org](http://www.AbortionRisks.org).

Download free fact sheets on the risks of abortion at [www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm).

#### Citations

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