

# **Women's Health after Abortion**

**The Medical and  
Psychological Evidence**

**Second Edition**

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Ian Gentles**



**The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research**

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## **Preface to the Second Edition**

The response to the first edition of this book has been gratifying. We have taken the opportunity of a new edition to make corrections, and update the material in Chapters Two and Four in the light of new research. We owe a great debt of gratitude to many individuals, especially Dr Deborah Zeni for her expert advice and assistance.

September 2003

## **Preface to the First Edition**

In 1985 the de Veber Institute's predecessor, the Human Life Research Institute, published *Abortion's Aftermath*, an examination of the physical complications and psychological sequelae of induced abortion. Heavy demand resulted in a second edition two years later, which was also well received. In the intervening years there have been many hundreds of studies published, so that our knowledge of the after-effects of abortion is much more extensive than it was in the 1980s. At the same time abortion research has become politicized as never before, and barriers have been raised against the full disclosure to the public – women in particular – of the negative sequelae of abortion.

This book has been written to make available to women and medical personnel new information about the complications of a medical procedure that is undergone by many hundreds of thousands of women in North America each year. Our aim is also to assist all those who are struggling to clarify for themselves the numerous health issues surrounding abortion.

Much of the material in this book is necessarily scientific and technical. To enhance the book's accessibility to non-medical people we have included a Glossary at the end. In each chapter, the first appearance of a term listed in the Glossary is signalled by the use of italics. For the same reason our referencing style is modified from the practice found in most scientific journals. Full titles of journals, rather than abbreviations, are used, for example, and page numbers are given for quotations.

The boxed quotations that appear in various places throughout the book are taken from the de Veber Institute's questionnaire to physicians across Canada. Entitled the *Survey of Canadian Physicians on Women's Health after Induced Abortion*, it reports the results of questions to doctors about abortion sequelae that they have treated in their practices.

The book falls into two parts. Chapters 1 to 10 deal with the physical or medical consequences, or sequelae, of abortion. Chapters 11 to 16 deal with the psychological consequences. Chapter 17 is an outline of the methodological problems that plague much of the research on induced abortion. Chapter 18 discusses the ethical and legal obligations of medical professionals to provide up-to-date information to patients seeking abortion about the documented risks associated with the procedure.

*Women's Health after Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence* could not have been completed without the active assistance of Dr Will Johnston, Dr Heather Morris, Professors Keith Cassidy and Barrie deVeber, Dr Bridget Campion, Lori Cavanagh, Martha Crean, Bob Fowler, Alan Fujiwara, Barry Jamieson, Jane Hodgins, Denyse O'Leary, Brent Rooney, and Bambi Rutledge. We also owe an immense debt of gratitude to the many friends of the Institute who have contributed generously to the research and publication costs of this study.