Book Reviews

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Complications: Abortion's Impact on Women. By Angela Lanfranchi, Ian Gentles, and Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy. Toronto, Canada: The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research, 2015. 443 pp. \$ 39.95. ISBN 978-0-920453-36-0.

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The three authors admit the “driving force behind [this] book is the concern about the ill effects—largely unknown, and for the most part unpublicized—of induced abortion on women” (1). The text represents a massive amount of research and a phenomenal complication of the most recent papers regarding abortion’s ill effects on women. The text is divided in four major topics consisting of twenty-one chapters with solid scientific evidence from peer-reviewed major medical journals. The text provides cogent and compelling evidence of the harm of abortion to women suitable for both medical professionals and nonmedical individuals alike.

Topic I: “The Big Picture”

This section consists of five chapters (1–5). Chapter 1 deals with the spiritual and psychological aspects of abortion with emphasis on healing. Chapter 2 explains how infant and maternal mortality have been affected by abortion. It also deals with the misinformation regarding abortion mortality comparing childbirth and abortion statistics. The natural experiment of Chile’s experience with abortion mortality pre- and postabortion provides a startling example of how banning abortions actually decreased maternal mortality from 70 in 10,000 live births in 1980 to 21 in 100,000 in 2008. Chapter 3 exposes the significant social and human rights costs of the practice of sex selection abortions in the world. The chapter notes that since the 1990s, there have been over 100 million girls lost to abortion in Asia and North America. This has led to a normal sex ratio that has rocketed from 103–107 males per 100 female births

to over 160–200 males per female live birth. This has led to a virtual dearth of reproductive age women in some regions of the world. Chapter 4 answers the question regarding abortions and crime rates. The economics of abortion contrast with the economic impact of increased family breakdown with increasing single-parent families. Confounding variables to the decrease or increase in crime are investigated from the scientific perspective. Chapter 5 deals with the important topic of informed consent in abortion. Significant scientific evidence is produced to demonstrate women are not receiving a full informed consent with regard to the risks of abortion in regard to mortality rates, breast cancer increases, preterm birth (PTB) increases, and the overlooked short- and long-term psychological effects of abortion.

Topic II: “The Medical Impact”

Section 2 consists of eleven chapters (6–16). Chapter 6 shares the physical complications of both medical and surgical abortions including immediate post-abortion hemorrhage, retained products, uterine/cervical lacerations, and psychiatric complications. Using the generally conservative rate of 4.5 percent of women experiencing some complication after surgical abortion, over 45,000 women a year in the United States alone suffer some complication (assuming approximately 1 million abortions/year). Further, linked data in Finland found a complication rate at six weeks postmedical abortion four times higher than surgical abortions (20 percent with medical abortion versus 5.6 percent in surgical abortion). Chapter 7 outlines the scientific case for the link with breast cancer and abortion, the biologic and epidemiologic proof. The protective effects of a *term* pregnancy are explained. The data report that for each year a woman delays childbearing after age twenty, she has a 5 percent risk of premenopausal breast cancer and a 3 percent increase risk of postmenopausal breast cancer. Chapter 8 discusses the present state of prenatal testing including the myths surrounding the need and use of prenatal testing. The significant lack of nondirective counseling is shared. The actual data from Canada found that termination

for congenital anomalies increased by 578 percent from 1991 to 1998. No benefit to abortion versus delivery is demonstrated. Chapter 9 covers the infections and infertility resulting from abortions. These include both the physical and psychological complications. Abortion was found to increase the risk of subfecundity by 620 percent. Chapter 10 elucidates the physical complications of injury, miscarriage, and placenta previa; all which are increased in surgical abortion. The literature reports an undetected uterine perforation rate seven times higher (using laparoscopy) than is reported in the literature. Placenta previa risk increases by 50 percent after a single abortion and 200 percent after two surgical abortions. Chapter 11 presents the compelling argument for the increased risk of maternal autoimmune disorders as a result of the surgical procedures and the introduction of increased amounts of fetal DNA with abortion. The biology of the transfer of transplacental stem cells into the maternal circulation poses a compelling etiology for the increase in autoimmune disorders in women with abortions. Chapter 12 dispels the continued myth that "abortion is safer than childbirth." Large, linked studies of women in various countries find that there is actually an *increased maternal mortality* in abortion compared to childbirth. The various etiologies for underreporting maternal mortality are explained. Medical abortion complications are covered in Chapter 13. The increased risk of failures and possible teratogenic effects of misoprostol are noted. The adverse postabortion complication rates in medical abortions have been quoted as high as 29 percent with the surgical complication rate at about 4 percent. Chapter 14 discusses the conundrum of the production of multiple embryos by In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) with the subsequent need to do multifetal pregnancy reductions and the postprocedure effects on parents and families. The ethical considerations of selectively destroying embryos are discussed in detail. Chapter 15 provides the mountains of data regarding the epidemic of PTB after abortion including the following complications relative to PTB: infant mortality, cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment, autism, epilepsy, and blindness. There are now over 140 peer-review papers demonstrating increased risk of PTB associated with surgical abortion. The sixteenth chapter illustrates how the abortion industry disregards the significant physical pain of abortion and provides inadequate pain relief to patients. No progress has been made or research attempted to help

decrease or alleviate the physical pain with surgical or medical abortions.

Topic III: "The Psychological and Social Impact"

The third section consists of three chapters (17–19). Chapter 17 explodes the sociological myths regarding abortion practice. Abortion has destroyed the nuclear family with huge increases in single families, less marriages, more unmarried relationships, increases in child neglect and abuse, and "feminized" poverty. The social impact of abortion remains woefully understudied due to the political aspects of abortion provision in general. The eighteenth chapter documents the devastating effects of abortion mental health with the increases in depression, suicide, and substance abuse. The politically correct attempts to suppress the knowledge are also revealed. The literature found in one study an 81 percent increased risk of mental health problems in postabortion patients. Chapter 19 provides significant data to substantiate the increased rates of intimate partner violence and abortion. The reports of interpartner violence in one study of men with violence toward women were found to be 48.9 percent with abortion and 25.9 percent without abortion.

Topic IV: "Women's Voices"

The final two chapters (20–21) consist of the women's own stories regarding abortion. Chapter 20 consists of the narrative story of 101 women who had abortions. Fully two-thirds of the women were coerced or pressured into their abortions. Up to 70 percent did not feel they had adequate counseling with informed consent. They also share their psychological distress after abortion. This is in stark contrast to American Psychological Society position that there is no psychological distress after abortion. Chapter 21 discusses the healing needed after abortion. All of the 101 women regretted their abortions and all continue to be affected by their abortions.

The text represents a massive amount of research and a phenomenal compilation of the most recent papers regarding abortion's ill effects on women. It is an outstanding read suitable for both medical professionals and nonmedical individuals alike. The text will provide solid evidence to anyone desiring to refute the medical myths surrounding abortion.