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## ***Psychological Effects of Abortion***

The Newcastle Institute of Public Health conducted a review of clinical studies reports published in Australia and internationally over the past 30 years looking at the psychological consequences of the termination of pregnancy on women<sup>1</sup>. The key findings of this review are as follows.

- The overwhelming indication from the literature is that the legal and voluntary termination of pregnancy rarely causes immediate or lasting negative psychological consequences in healthy women.
- Negative psychological outcomes tend to be associated with particular personality traits including impulsivity and low self-esteem.
- Strong partner or parental support for the woman improves psychological outcomes and results in few negative changes to the relationship.
- The decision to terminate a pregnancy due to medical or genetic reasons seems to have more of a negative impact often eliciting grief and depression among women.
- Some studies have reported positive outcomes for women such as relief.
- Comprehensive reviews of adolescent-specific literature have concluded that the effects on younger women are mild and transitory. Negative outcomes tend to be associated with confounding factors such as pre-existing psychological conditions and weak family support.

### **(Footnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Bonevski, Billie and Adams 2001 *Psychological Effects of the Termination of Pregnancy*  
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*The Australian Reproductive Health Alliance (ARHA) is an advocacy agency that seeks to advance the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994). ARHA promotes public support for reproductive rights and gender equity.*

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