

However, abortion providers deny the existence of PAT. The written information available to women does not even mention that 10% of women will be psychologically affected by abortion (these are conservative estimates). The experience of British Victims of Abortion – a service with nearly 20-years of post-abortion counselling experience – suggests that the majority of women do not receive any written information prior to the procedure.

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Post- Abortion Trauma

*What you need
 to know*



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What is post-abortion trauma (PAT)?

PAT is a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is the grief, guilt and anger associated with the loss of a child through the mother's abortion decision.

How many women are affected by PAT?

Research indicates that at least 10% of women who have an abortion will suffer PAT at some point between having the abortion and the end of their lives.

Does PAT only affect the mother of the aborted child?

No. PAT may also affect the father of the child as well as the would-be grandparents, or any existing children. PAT can affect anyone who is involved in the abortion experience.

One in three women, men, grandparents, children and families have their lives touched by abortion.

Who is most at risk of suffering PAT?

- Women who feel they were pressured/coerced to have the abortion.
- Women who have already completed one or more pregnancies before the abortion; also women who subsequently become pregnant with a “wanted” child.
- Women with a significant amount of past trauma – particularly a history of loss.
- Women who have experienced more than one abortion.
- Women who have experienced an RU486 chemical abortion.
- Women who have had abortions for foetal disability or other medical problems.

Post-abortion trauma: Examined

Some of the symptoms of PAT include:

- Depression and/or suicidal thoughts
- Guilt
- Grief

- Broken relationships
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Sexual dysfunction or promiscuity
- Seeking atonement through a replacement baby
- Emotional numbing
- Sleep disturbances
- Low self-esteem
- Panic attacks
- Self-punishment

Are women who seek abortion warned of the possible psychological complications?

The clinical guidelines on abortion care from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists state that, “Verbal advice must be supported by accurate, impartial printed information which the woman considering abortion can understand and may take away and read before the procedure”.