



The Right to Live

EXPLORING

ABORTION

SPUC ABORTION PROJECT PACK

This pack is printed and published by:
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INDEX

1. The Beginning of Life
2. Abortion: history, methods and statistics
3. The Case for Abortion Examined:
 - i. 'Safe, legal' abortion vs. Back Street Abortion
 - ii. A Woman's Right to Choose?
 - iii. Every Child a Wanted Child
 - iv. Abortion to Save the Mother's Life
 - v. Abortion and Poverty/Social Exclusion
 - vi. Abortion after Rape
 - vii. Abortion and Disability or Eugenic Abortion
4. Religious Views on Abortion
5. The Effects of Abortion on Women
6. Population Control, Political Control
7. The Work of the Pro-Life Movement



The Beginning of Life

Day 1

Human life begins when sperm and egg meet in fertilisation forming the single cell called a zygote. Genetic make up is complete and details such as colour of eyes, hair, sex and even build are determined. A unique individual has come into being.

Day 5-6

The embryo – known at this stage as the blastocyst – travels down into the womb and burrows into the lining. This is called implantation and takes up to 7 days.

Day 12

Once implantation is complete, the placenta starts to form. Nourishment and oxygen pass from the mother's blood to the baby.

Days 14-15

The nervous system begins to form with what is known as the primitive streak.

Day 17-23

The baby is 6mm long, begins developing his/her own blood cells and has a brain, eyes, ears, mouth, kidneys and liver. The baby's heart starts to beat.

Day 30

Arms and legs have begun to grow.

Week 6

Skeleton and reflexes are present and the baby responds to touch around the mouth. Liver, kidneys and lungs have formed.

Week 8

The unborn child is now known as a foetus, which means 'little one.' All organs are functioning now except the lungs; the baby has only to grow and mature, just as a child grows into an adult. If a pin is pressed in the palm of the baby as early as this, he/she will move the hand away and open his/her mouth.

Week 9

The baby can make a fist and will grasp an object stroking the palm of the hand. He/she leaps up and down in the womb with movements co-ordinated.

Week 11	The eyes, ears, arms, legs, fingers, toes and most internal systems including the brain have been shaped. The foetus can move his/her face and even smile; responds to light, noise and pressure and moves around the amniotic sac.
Week 12	Most of the surface of the body is sensitive and responsive to touch.
Week 17	By this stage, the baby can kick, punch, do somersaults and cry, though without air there is no sound. Experts have recommended giving pain relief to the baby before an abortion as early as week 17.
Week 20	The baby sleeps and wakes. Ultrasound can detect rapid eye movement, which occurs while dreaming. The skeleton has changed from cartilage to bone. The baby can hear and remember sounds from as early as week 20.
Week 22	Advances in medical technology can enable babies to survive outside the womb from this point. In May 2003, Aaliyah Hart was born 3 months premature, weighing just 12 ounces. Aaliyah is the smallest surviving baby in the UK, born after doctors said there was only a 10% chance of survival.
Week 24	The baby weighs approximately 780 grams and is about 270 mm from head to toe. Abortion is legal until 24 weeks and up to birth for reasons such as disability.
Week 28	The baby is fully formed. His/her eyes open. The baby can hear the mother's heartbeat and voice as well as sounds outside her body.
Week 30	The baby learns to recognise the mother's voice.
9 th Month	At birth, the child will have about 2,000,000,000,000 cells. 41 generations of cell division will have taken place from the original single cell, leaving just another 4 before mature adulthood.

We are living human beings from the very beginning, growing and developing. Birth is just another event in the extraordinary process of human development

“The history of man for the nine months preceding his birth would, probably, be far more interesting and contain events of greater moment than for all the three-score years and ten that follow it.” Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 18th century poet

2 ABORTION

A brief history of abortion

In 1861, the Offences Against the Person Act made it illegal to supply or use any “poison or other noxious thing” or to use “any instrument or other means” to cause a woman to miscarry. It outlawed abortion by either the woman or any other person such as a doctor, nurse, midwife or pharmacist.

In 1938, Dr. Alec Bourne performed an abortion on a 14-year-old girl who claimed to have been raped by soldiers. He gave himself up to the police, was charged with performing an illegal abortion, put on trial and acquitted on the grounds that the girl would have become ‘a mental wreck’ if she had not had the abortion. As a result of the Bourne case, more and more abortions began to be practised in Britain in cases where the woman’s physical or mental health was thought to be in danger, a loophole in the law that was interpreted increasingly loosely. Dr Bourne became so concerned about the results of his action that he became a founder member of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC).

In 1966, David Steel MP introduced a Private Members Bill into parliament to legalise abortion. The Bill was passed on 27th October 1967 and came into force on 27th April 1968 and became the Abortion Act 1967. Supporters of the Abortion Act claimed then that it was ‘not the intention of the promoters of the Bill to leave a wide open door for abortion on request’ although Government Statistics show that this is precisely what has happened.

Though no specific time limit was introduced by the Act, it was linked to the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, which states; ‘that no unborn child could be killed who was capable of being born alive’. This was taken to be 28 weeks gestation.

In 1990, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act amended the Abortion Act to allow abortions up to the 24th week of pregnancy and liberalised the law even further, allowing disabled babies to be aborted up until birth. Since then, doctors have cited disabilities such as spina bifida and cleft palate as ‘serious abnormalities’ deserving late-term abortion.

The Abortion Act allows abortion with the signature of two doctors, on any one or more of the following grounds:

A – G (see Dept of Health Statistical Bulletin sheet – Key Facts under Statistics in the following section)

Ground C (the most frequently cited ground for abortion under the Abortion Act 1967)

States that “the pregnancy has now exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman.” In their first report on *Unplanned Pregnancy 1972*, it is noted that The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists wrote “there is no such danger of injury in the majority of these cases as the ‘indication’ is purely a social one”.

Methods of Abortion

All of the following abortion methods are carried out under the 1967 Abortion Act:

RU-486 or MIFEPRISTONE/MIFEGYNE

The most common type of medical or drug abortion is RU486 marketed under the names of Mifepristone or Mifegyne. This method of abortion can be performed up to 20 weeks of pregnancy, with or without prostaglandin. It works by blocking the effects of the natural hormone, progesterone, which is required to maintain the lining of the womb during pregnancy. RU486 starves the womb of progesterone, the lining of the womb breaks down, and it is lost along with the developing baby. RU486 fails to abort in at least 5% of cases; women then undergo a surgical abortion.

VACUUM ASPIRATION

Vacuum aspiration is an early surgical abortion and far and away the most common method of abortion used in England and Wales. It is commonly performed up to 14 weeks of pregnancy. It involves the cervix being dilated or forced open and a tube inserted into the womb that is attached to a strong vacuum pump. The unborn baby is basically sucked apart, through the tube and into a glass jar, the contents of which are checked to ensure completion.

DILATION AND EVACUATION (D&E)

Dilation & Evacuation is a surgical abortion performed from 14 weeks when the baby's skeleton has hardened and is often used in conjunction with Vacuum Aspiration. The cervix is dilated and surgical pliers are used to grasp and pull out the baby, dismembering it in the process.

PROSTAGLANDINS

Prostaglandin is a hormone-like substance and is the most common medical form of late abortion in the UK. It can be given either by drip or injection and causes contractions and premature labour. Usually the immature baby does not survive the labour and is born dead. In some cases the baby might survive so to avoid this dilemma, especially in later abortions, a poison is administered to the baby to ensure it is delivered dead.

There are some drugs and devices, which are legally viewed as contraceptives but can cause an early abortion in some cases.

ABORTIFACIENT DRUGS/DEVICES

The morning after pill is misleadingly marketed as 'emergency contraception'. Each dose is the equivalent of 50 mini contraceptive pills. The manufacturer states that it can act as a contraceptive by suppressing ovulation and it also works by altering the lining of the womb so that the newly conceived embryo cannot implant. Therefore, causing an early abortion. Other drugs and devices such as the IUD (Inter-Uterine Device) or coil and the mini pill are marketed as contraceptives but can cause an early abortion in the same way as the morning after pill.



Statistical Bulletin

Abortion Statistics, England and Wales: 2008

This bulletin summarises information from the abortion notification forms returned to the Chief Medical Officers of England and Wales in respect of abortions carried out in England and Wales in 2008.

KEY FACTS

In 2008, for women resident in England and Wales:

- the total number of abortions was 195,296, compared with 198,499 in 2007, a fall of 1.6%
- the age-standardised abortion rate was 18.2 per 1,000 resident women aged 15-44, compared with 18.6 in 2007
- the abortion rate was highest at 36 per 1,000, for women age 19, the same as in 2007
- the under-16 abortion rate was 4.2 and the under-18 rate was 18.9 per 1,000 women, both lower than in 2007
- 91% of abortions were funded by the NHS; of these, just over half (58%) took place in the independent sector under NHS contract
- 90% of abortions were carried out at under 13 weeks gestation; 73% were at under 10 weeks
- medical abortions accounted for 38% of the total
- 1,988 abortions (1%) were under ground E, risk that the child would be born handicapped

Non-residents:

- in 2008, there were 6,862 abortions for non-residents carried out in hospitals and clinics in England and Wales (7,099 in 2007)

Contents

Introduction

Data quality

Overview

Analysis and commentary

Recommendations from the
National Statistics Disclosure
Review

Editorial notes

Index to tables

Reference tables

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4.2 Statutory grounds for abortion

4.2.1 A legally induced abortion must be certified by two registered medical practitioners as justified under one or more of the following grounds:

- A the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated (Abortion Act, 1967 as amended, section 1(1)(c))
- B the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(b))
- C the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(a))
- D the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of any existing children of the family of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(a))
- E there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped (section 1(1)(d))

or in an emergency, certified by the operating practitioner as immediately necessary:

- F to save the life of the pregnant woman (section 1(4))
- G to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(4))

4.2.2 In 2008, the vast majority (98%) of abortions were undertaken under ground C and a further 1% under ground D. A similar proportion were carried out under ground E. Grounds A and B together accounted for less than a half percent of abortions. The proportion of ground C abortions has risen steadily with a corresponding reduction in ground D cases. (See Table 3ii.) Less than half a per cent of ground C only terminations were reported as being performed because of a risk to the woman's physical health. Abortions are rarely performed under grounds F or G.

4.2.3 Chromosomal abnormalities were reported for about a third (37%) of cases under ground E, congenital malformations in about 48%. The most commonly reported abnormalities were of the nervous system (24% of all ground E cases) and the musculoskeletal system (7%); Down's syndrome (22% of all ground E cases) was the most commonly reported chromosomal abnormality (Table 9; specific groups are shown only where there are 10 or more cases in total. See Section 5).

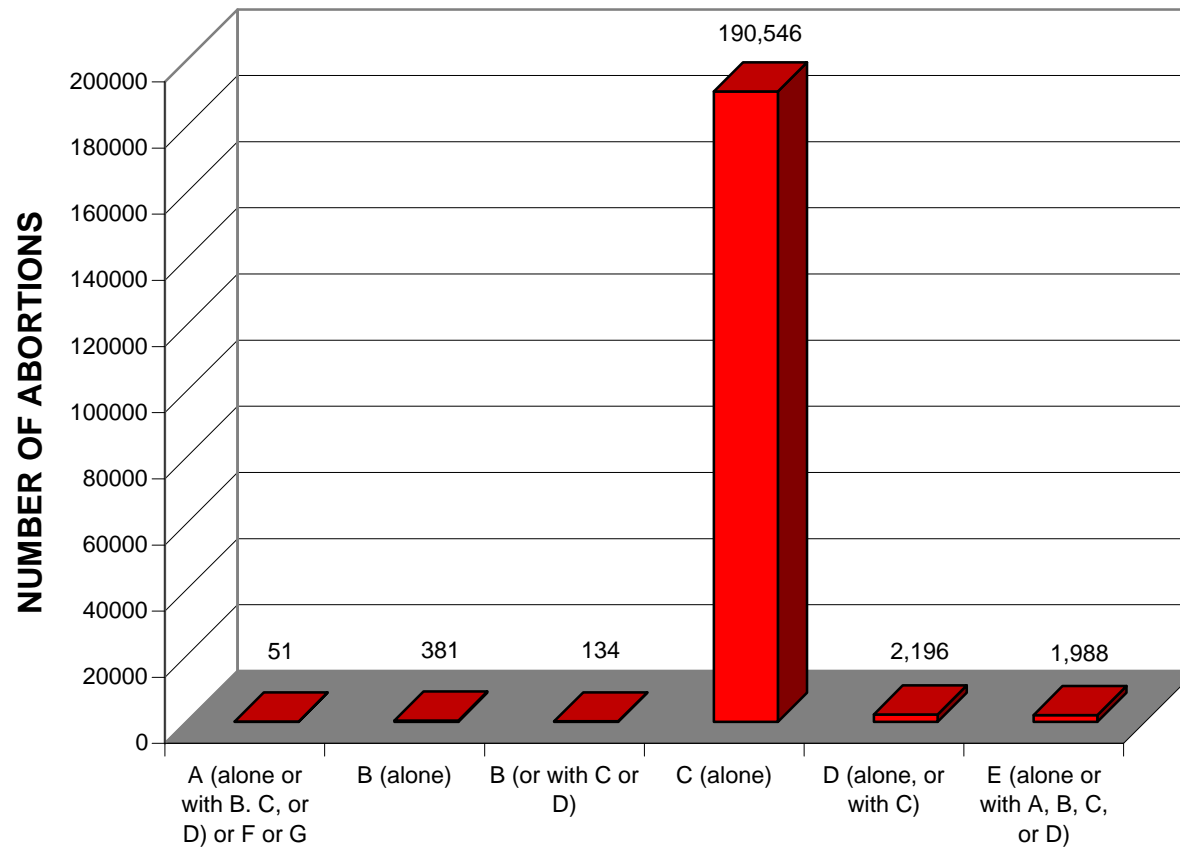
4.2.4 As in 2007 and each year since 1999, fewer than 10 abortions under ground E in 2008 were associated with rubella.

4.2.5 For years 2006, 2007 and 2008, some of the principal medical conditions for abortions performed under Ground E had to be suppressed as the totals for each single year were too small to release (see Section 5). In the three years 2006-2008, there were 15 cases with a principal medical condition of the congenital malformations Microcephaly (ICD10 Code Q02) and 11 cases recorded as 'other malformations of the digestive system' (ICD10 Codes Q38-45). Some other conditions may be available by ICD 10 code on request. Other conditions with suppressed data may be published in a 9 year aggregated table.

4.3 Gestation period

4.3.1 The vast majority of abortions are performed at under 13 weeks gestation.

REGISTERED ABORTIONS - ENGLAND AND WALES RESIDENTS 2008

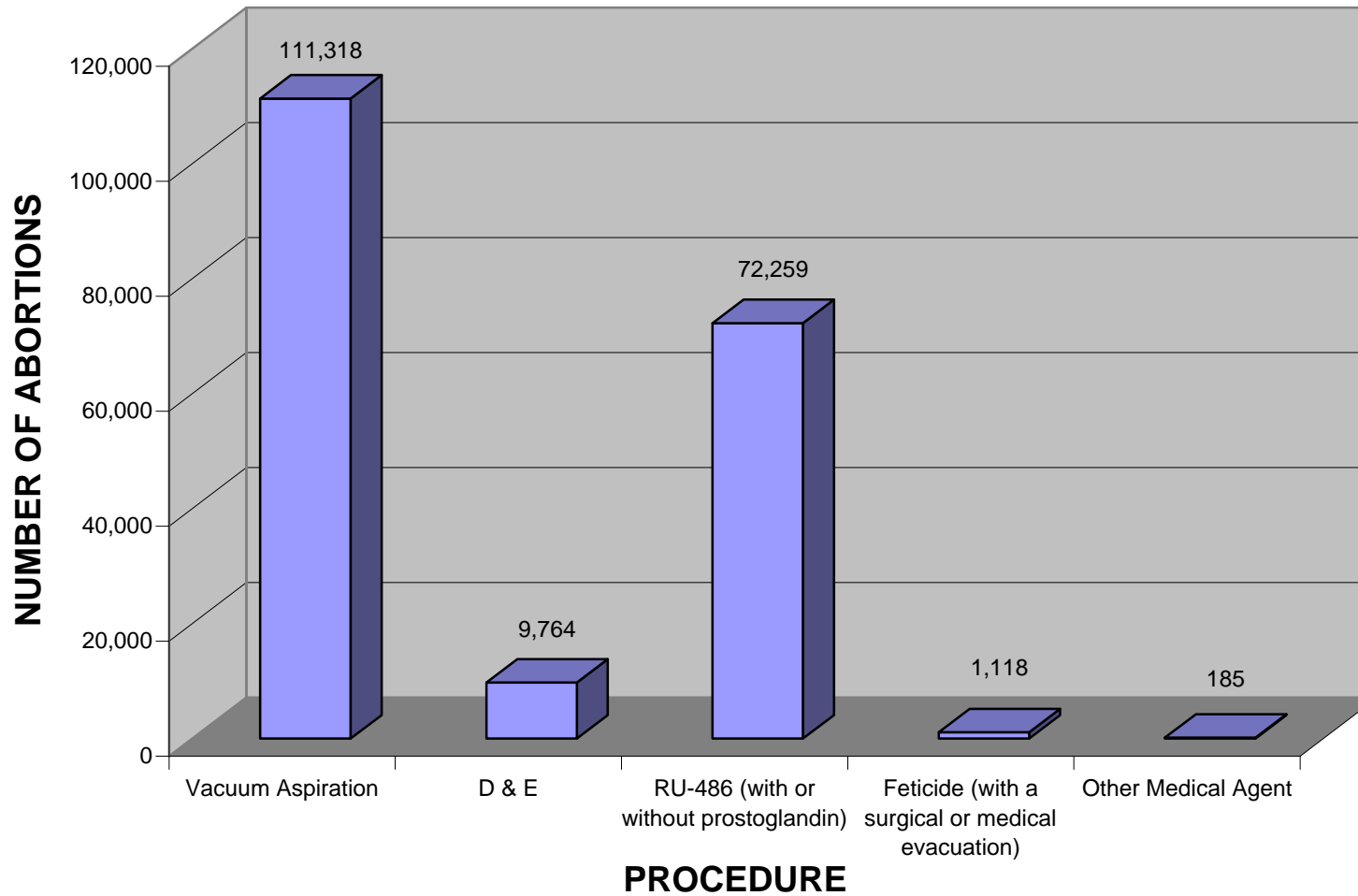


STATUTORY GROUNDS

Ground C is the most frequently cited ground for abortion under the Abortion Act 1967 which states that: "the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman." The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists wrote in their first report on Unplanned Pregnancy 1972 "there is no such danger of injury in the majority of these cases as the 'indication' is purely a social one"

These National Statistics were prepared by the Government Statistical Service/Bulletin 2009/01

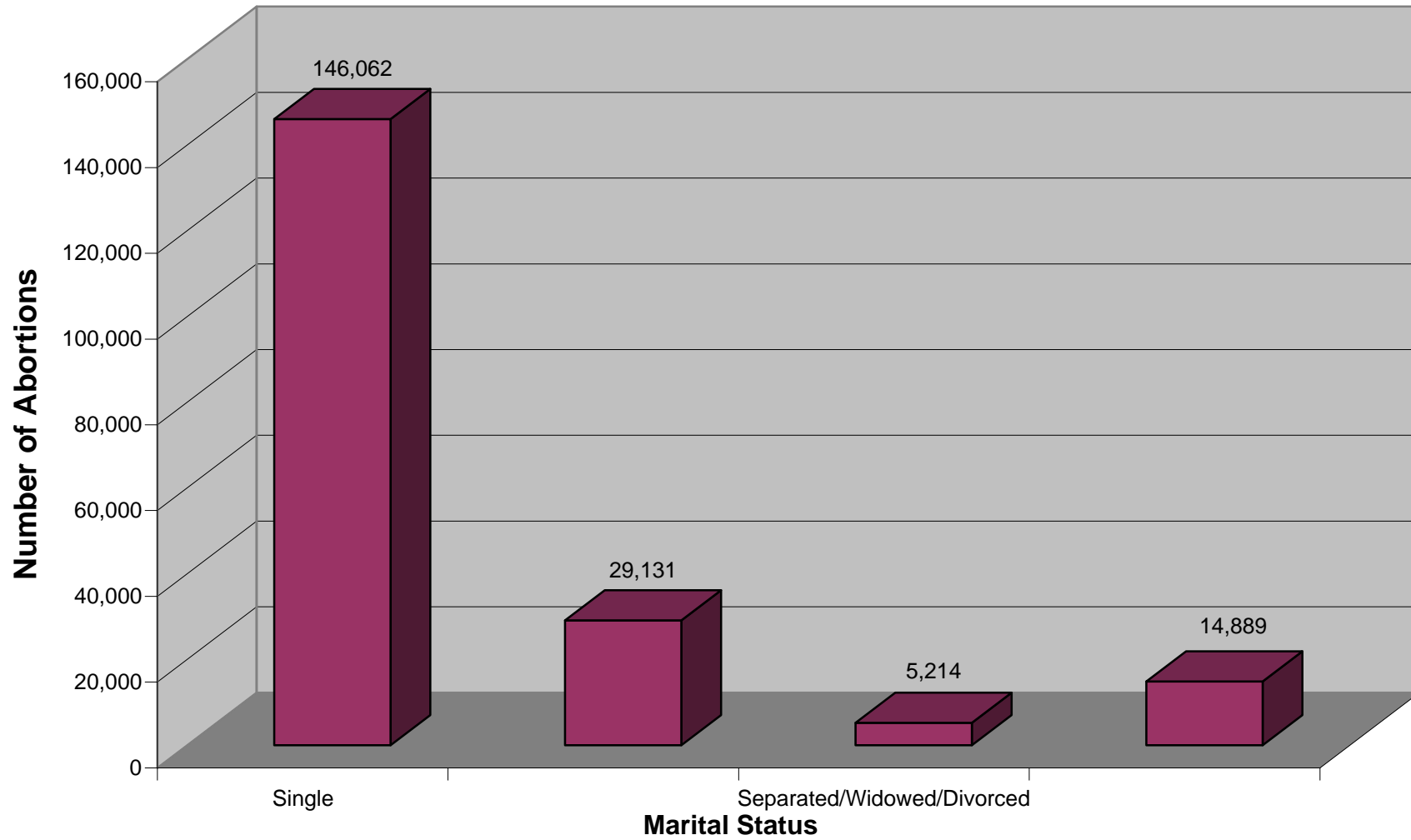
REGISTERED ABORTIONS BY PROCEDURE IN ENGLAND AND WALES 2008



For abortions at 22 weeks or beyond, feticide is recommended prior to the evacuation of the uterus to stop the fetal heart.
(Recording of feticide was introduced in 2002)

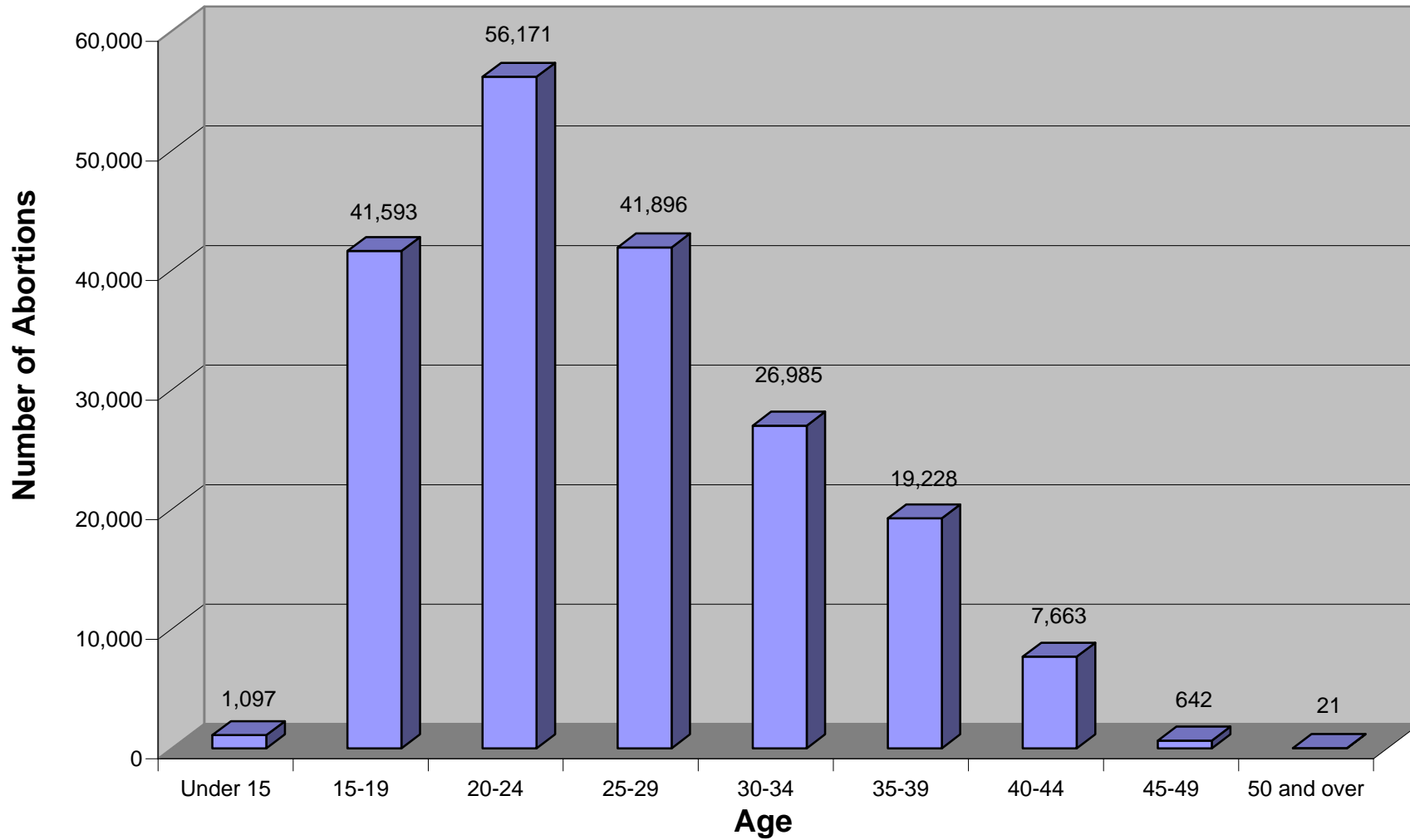
These National Statistics were prepared by the Government Statistical Service/Bulletin 2009/01

REGISTERED ABORTIONS - ENGLAND AND WALES RESIDENTS 2008



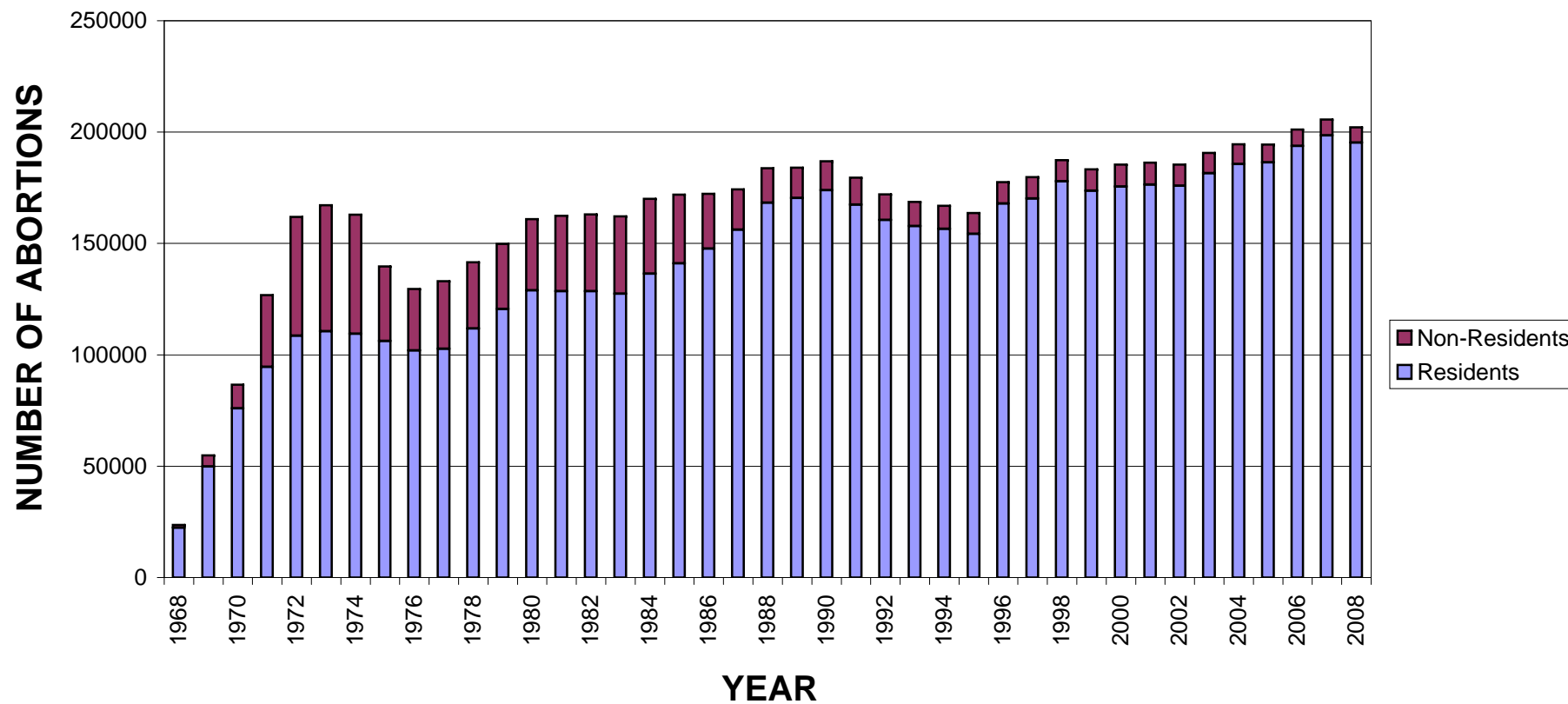
These National Statistics were prepared by the Government Statistical Service/Bulletin 2009/01

Registered Abortions by Age in England and Wales 2008



These National Statistics were prepared by the Government Statistical Service/Bulletin 2009/01

REGISTERED ABORTIONS IN ENGLAND & WALES, RESIDENTS & NON-RESIDENTS 1968 - 2008



These National Statistics were prepared by the Government Statistical Service/Bulletin 2009/01

3 THE CASE FOR ABORTION EXAMINED:

i 'Safe, legal' abortion vs. Back Street Abortion

Legal abortion does not necessarily mean safe abortion. See *Abortion and the physical health of the pregnant woman*.

Abortion is not an inevitable part of life as abortion supporters like to suggest, nor is it a solution to any social or moral problem. Abortion is a sign that society is failing women by providing inadequate resources and support to women in crisis pregnancies. The early feminists were against abortion: what they said was: **“when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is a sign that, by education or circumstances, she has been greatly wronged.”**ⁱ This is the line that present day pro-life feminists promote. Serrin Foster of Feminists for Life describes abortion as **“a symptom of, not a solution to, the continuing struggles women face in the workplace, at home and in society.”**ⁱⁱ

Pro-abortion campaigners have always claimed that legal abortion is necessary to stop thousands of dangerous back-street abortions going on and many women dying as a result. This argument, accompanied by alarming statistics, has been used all over the world to persuade politicians to change the law on abortion but there is little evidence to suggest that backstreet abortion is the massive problem some campaigners claim it to be. For example:

- ❖ Dr Bernard Nathanson, joint founder of NARAL in the US (National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws) admitted when he changed his mind about abortion that the drive to legalise abortion was based on lies. He said: “We aroused enough sympathy to sell our program of permissive abortion by fabricating the number of illegal abortions done annually in the US. The actual figure was approaching 100,000 but the figure we gave to the media repeatedly was 1,000,000. Repeating the big lie often enough convinces the public. **The number of women dying from illegal abortions was around 200-250 annually. The figure we constantly fed to the media was 10,000.**”ⁱⁱⁱ
- ❖ In Portugal in 1982, it was claimed that 2000 women were dying from illegal abortion every year. However, only 2099 women of childbearing age had died from **all** causes, according to the then most recent available statistics. Either Portuguese women never die of illness or accident, or the 2000-a-year figure was false.^{iv}
- ❖ Dr Malcolm Potts, a pro-abortion campaigner and the former director of the international abortion provider International Planned Parenthood Federation, wrote: “Those who want the law to be liberalized will stress the hazards of illegal abortion and claim that hundreds, or thousands, of women die unnecessarily each year, when the actual number is far lower.”^v

Legal abortion does not stop backstreet abortion. Between 1968 and 1988, there have been 986-recorded abortions performed illegally and 293 prosecutions in the UK.^{vi}

The fact that abortion happens is not a reason for making it legal. Murder, rape and domestic violence occur on a daily basis and cannot be entirely prevented, but no one suggests legalising these crimes or allowing them to take place in a hygienic environment.

ii *A Woman's Right to Choose?*

- We all have the freedom to make decisions about our lives, but with freedom comes responsibility. Every society restricts choices that harm others. A drunk person does not have the right to drive a car. The right of other road-users to safety is considered more important than a person's right to drive home after a few drinks. Similarly, the choice to commit child abuse is always wrong.
- Every woman has the right to make decisions about her own body, but mother and baby are always two separate people, with different genetic codes, nervous systems, fingerprints and even bloodstreams. The baby is still dependent on the mother long after being born but no one claims that the baby is part of the mother's body for that reason.
- Portraying abortion as a woman's right hides the fact that women are often pressurised into abortion for financial, social or personal reasons. A study in 1989 found that pregnant women themselves make only 30% of abortion decisions. In 33% of cases, the woman's partner made the decision, doctors in 20% of cases, friends in 10% and parents in 7% of cases.^{vii} More pregnant women now suffer domestic violence than pregnancy complications: a study in March 2003 found that 17% of pregnant women had been the victims of domestic violence and 3.4% had been violently attacked during their current pregnancy.^{viii} When society loses its respect for the unborn, it follows that it also loses its respect for pregnant women. Women also bear the brunt of the abortion aftermath. 80% of relationships break up after an abortion.^{ix}

iii *Every Child A Wanted Child*

This slogan sounds compassionate, but what it really means is 'every unwanted child a dead child'.

- ❖ Abortion has done nothing to end child abuse. In the UK and USA, recorded cases of child abuse have increased substantially since abortion was legalised. Northern Ireland, which is not covered by the 1967 Abortion Act, has the lowest incidence of infant death in the UK.^x
- ❖ Most abused children were originally 'wanted'. In a landmark study of 674 physically abused children, 91% of the children had been wanted and planned for.^{xi} A study carried out shortly before abortion was legalised in the US found that "most women who were most regretful of the pregnancy now claim they would have the child again if given the opportunity [whereas] one of every six mothers who were initially pleased with pregnancy would choose not to have the child again."^{xii}
- ❖ Abortion is the ultimate form of child abuse, giving parents the right to kill their unborn children if they are not exactly what they want e.g. if they are a girl rather than a boy, if they have a disability or come at an inconvenient time.

The problem of child abuse should be solved by eliminating abuse not children.

- ◆ Between 1967 and 1990, only 151 abortions have been carried out to save the mother's life, a figure amounting to 0.004% of all abortions.^{xiii}
- ◆ In 1992, a group of Ireland's top gynaecologists wrote: "We affirm that there are no medical circumstances justifying direct abortion, that is, no circumstances in which the life of a mother may only be saved by directly terminating the life of her unborn child."^{xiv} When Dublin's National Maternity Hospital (where 10% of all births in Ireland occurred) investigated the 21 deaths of pregnant women there between 1970-1979, they found that not a single one of those deaths could have been avoided by abortion.^{xv} Incidentally, Ireland, a country where the unborn child is constitutionally protected, has the lowest maternal death rate in the world. The UK, where abortion is available practically on demand, has over five times Ireland's maternal death rate.^{xvi}
- ◆ Developments in medicine mean that the 'abortion to save the mother's life' argument is becoming harder and harder to justify. It is now possible for women with heart defects to carry a baby to term with expert help and life-threatening conditions such as cancer can often be treated without harming the unborn child. Women facing difficult pregnancies have a right to the best available medical support.
- ◆ Direct abortion is the **deliberate** killing of an unborn child. Treatment to save the life of the mother that results in the death of the child *as an expected but not intended side effect* is not a direct abortion, e.g. in the case of an ectopic pregnancy. In this situation, the baby begins to develop in the woman's fallopian tube and has to be removed or the tube will rupture and cause the death of the woman. This involves the unavoidable death of the unborn baby but the aim of the operation is to save the mother not to kill the baby.

v *Abortion and poverty/social exclusion*

- No woman should be driven to abort her baby through poverty or social exclusion. Abortion simply allows society to get away with ignoring the problems facing women in crisis pregnancies. The compassionate response is to allow women, whatever their background, the resources necessary to bring up their children.
- Abortion discriminates against the poor. Margaret Sanger, the founder of International Planned Parenthood, the world's largest abortion provider, argued in 1922 that "all our problems are the result of over breeding among the working classes."^{xvii} Planned Parenthood has argued that abortion is "cost-effective" because "for every \$1.00 spent by government to pay for abortions for poor women, about \$4.00 is saved in public medical and welfare expenditures incurred as a result of an unintended birth."^{xviii} It is in the interests of governments to pay for abortion rather than providing housing and maintenance for women and children in need.
- In the UK, mothers in need can ask for state benefits and housing.
- The law requires fathers to contribute to the maintenance of the child. If a man fathers a child he cannot simply run away.
- Pro-life charities such as Good Counsel and LIFE offer housing and support to women in crisis pregnancies. SPUC will always respond to requests for help from pregnant women: there is no need for women to face a crisis pregnancy alone.
- Women in actual danger can request police protection and safe housing

There are humane solutions to poverty and social exclusion. SPUC works to create a climate of tolerance and respect for life rather than promoting abortion as an easy way out.

vi *Abortion after rape*

- Pregnancy as a result of rape is extremely rare. A woman is only fertile for 3-7 days during her cycle and the extreme physical and psychological trauma of being raped makes it difficult for fertilisation or implantation to occur.
- Pregnancies as a result of rape therefore only account for a tiny proportion of the hundreds of abortions carried out in Britain every day.
- Abortion is not a 'solution' to rape. The experience cannot be undone and should be responded to with compassion and support. For many rape victims who find themselves pregnant, the biggest trauma is not being pregnant but the memory of being raped.^{xix}
- Abortion is itself a violent and invasive procedure. It should be remembered that many women who are traumatised by abortion describe a sense of having been violated.
- It is old-fashioned and socially unacceptable to judge a child by his/her father's actions or to punish a child for the crime of the father. A child may be conceived as the result of rape but cannot be held responsible. Pam Stenzel and Julie Makimaa were two such children.

"My biological father is a rapist. But I am still a human being and I still have value. My life isn't worth any less than yours because of the way I was conceived. And I did not deserve the death penalty because of the crime of my father." Pam Stenzel Straight talk from Pam Stenzel (1998) Vision Video Inc. PO Box 540, Worcester, Pennsylvania, 19490, USA

"It doesn't matter how I began. What matters is who I will become." Julie Makimaa
<http://www.afterabortion.org/rape.html>

- Abortion providers are not primarily interested in abortion for rape victims but use them as a smokescreen to cover up their real intentions. They want abortion to be available to anyone, regardless of the circumstances. The use of rape victims is exploitative and trivialises the terrible damage done to women by rape. What makes rape a terrible crime is not the *potential* for a woman to become pregnant but the *reality* that she has been subjected to a violent and humiliating attack.

"I, having lived through rape, and also having raised a child 'conceived in rape,' feel personally assaulted and insulted every time I hear that abortion should be legal because of rape and incest. I feel that we're being used by pro-abortionists to further the abortion issue, even though we've not been asked to tell our side." Kathleen DeZeeuw <http://www.afterabortion.org/rape.html>

Lisa was 16 when she was raped on her way home from school. When she found out she was pregnant she was devastated, but said: "I had to have the baby. He was just as much a victim as I was and I wasn't going to make him suffer." However, when the baby was born, she rejected him to start with because he resembled her attacker. "I couldn't look at him. I didn't want to hold him. I told them to take him away." Eventually, she came to love him and says: "It never ceases to amaze me that something so precious and wonderful came from something so terrible. He's my beautiful boy and I wouldn't change him for the world." The Sun newspaper, 21 January 2004

- ❑ A person with a disability has the right to life along with every other member of society: aborting a baby because he or she has, or even *might* have, a disability, is the ultimate form of discrimination. In Britain, it is legally permitted to abort a baby on grounds of disability up to birth.
- ❑ It is generally assumed that parents will opt for an abortion if pre-natal screening reveals a disability and they are often put under pressure to do so.
- ❑ 9 out of 10 unborn babies diagnosed with spina bifida are aborted.^{xx} A similar proportion of Down's Syndrome babies are aborted.^{xxi}
- ❑ Encouraging abortion on grounds of disability encourages negative stereotypes about people with disabilities. In an article published on a pro-abortion website, Anne Furedi, a leading abortion advocate, argued that 'to deny this woman's choice is to condemn her to carry to term and give birth to a child that she may dread and wish dead.'^{xxii}
- ❑ Many people argue in favour of aborting disabled babies on the grounds that they are 'better off dead'. Even when babies are born so disabled that they can only live for a short amount of time, they have the right to live out their natural lifespan, however long or short it is.
- ❑ Some claim that abortion 'prevents' disability but all it does is kill those who happen to have a disability. No doctor would claim to be curing cancer by killing cancer patients.

In May 2003, the International Down Syndrome Screening Conference was held in London. A group of people with Down's Syndrome had asked if they could speak at the conference but were not allowed to. They turned up anyway and one of them, Anya Souza, was finally allowed to say something about her own condition. She said:

"I can't get rid of my Down's Syndrome, but you can't get rid of my happiness. You can't get rid of the happiness I give others either. It's doctors like you that want to test pregnant women and stop people like me being born. Together with my family and friends I have fought to prevent my separation from normal society. I have fought for my rights... I may have Down's Syndrome but I am a person first."

4 RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON ABORTION

Early Christian Tradition

Judeo-Christian tradition going back thousands of years has always valued human life, including unborn human life. The Bible repeatedly refers to children before birth as simply very small/young children. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus and John the Baptist 'greet' one another whilst they are still in the wombs of their mothers. Luke 1:41 "It happened, when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Psalm 139 describes the development of the unborn baby: "For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body." One of the earliest Christian writings, the Didache or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles states: "You shall not kill the child in the womb or murder a new-born infant."

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church opposes abortion because it believes that life is sacred and inviolable. In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote an encyclical letter called *Evangelium Vitae* (the Gospel of Life) in which he spoke of "the sacred value of human life from its very beginning" and of the struggle between the Culture of Life and the Culture of Death.

The Orthodox Churches

Generally, the Orthodox Churches forbid abortion as going against the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill'. The Russian Orthodox Church condemned abortion in its document *The Church and the Nation* published in 2000.

Protestant Denominations

Many Protestant and Evangelical Christians are against abortion. In Northern Ireland, Catholics and Protestants have united against abortion. However, some denominations are more pro-abortion.

The Church of England states that the unborn child is alive and created by God. The 1993 General Synod stated that "the number of abortions carried out since the passage of the Abortion Act 1967 is unacceptably high." However, the Church of England also believes that abortion is sometimes morally acceptable such as when a baby is suffering from a serious disability.^{xxiii}

Islam

Islam teaches that life begins at conception and is created by God. The unborn child has certain rights such as the right to care, protection and life. Abortion on any grounds is forbidden in the Islamic holy book Al'Quran. "Do not kill or take a human life which God has declared to be sacred." (Chapter 6,verse 151)

Judaism

The Torah or Jewish law forbids the taking of innocent life and stresses that human beings are made in the image of God. Maimonides, a twelfth century interpreter of Jewish law declared: “A descendent of Noah who kills any human being, even a foetus in its mother’s womb, is to be put to death.” The only exception was if the mother’s life was in danger. However, even though traditional Judaism condemns abortion, there has been considerable argument within the Jewish community since the 1960s about whether or not abortion is permissible.

Buddhism

In Buddhism there is no central authority on ethical matters but the Dalai Lama has spoken in favour of abortion under certain circumstances. In 1993 he said: “Of course, abortion, from a Buddhist viewpoint, is an act of killing and is negative, generally speaking. But it depends on the circumstances. If the unborn child will be retarded or if the birth will create serious problems for the parent, these are cases where there can be an exception.”^{xxiv}

Hinduism

Hindu scriptures refer to abortion as *garha-batta* (womb killing) and the *Atharva Veda* describes abortionists as the greatest of sinners. Gandhi, perhaps the most respected Hindu of the twentieth century, said: “It seems to me clear as daylight that abortion would be a crime.”

Atheists and agnostics for life

Many atheists and agnostics view abortion as a violation of human rights and hold pro-life opinions for this reason. As one pro-life atheist who once had an abortion herself commented: “for the atheist who believes that when you die, your life is over... there will be no comforting of this being by a heavenly father, angels or relatives after a torturous death; there will be no mere re-incarnational transfer. Thousands of times each day unique, never-to-be-again, individual beings have their one and only chance at life terminated.”

Or, as Doris Gordon, founder of Libertarians for Life, expresses it: “the purpose of abortion is not merely pregnancy termination; its purpose is to kill, to take the life of prenatal human offspring. Under justice, however, there is no such thing as a right to kill innocent people – no exceptions.” Atheists can be passionately against injustice, violence, murder, the death penalty and war. They can therefore, just as logically, oppose abortion.

5 THE EFFECTS OF ABORTION ON WOMEN

Abortion and ‘the physical health of the pregnant woman.’

No medical or surgical procedure is 100% safe. Abortion carries certain physical and psychological risks to the wellbeing of the mother that are rarely talked about.

The immediate physical risks associated with abortion are fairly small, but as most abortions are performed for social rather than medical reasons, healthy women are being exposed to these risks. There is also increasing evidence of a link between abortion and the development of breast cancer in later life. During pregnancy, especially a first pregnancy, changes occur in the breast for the production of milk, and if this process is suddenly interrupted by an abortion while the cells are still in the process of changing, this may increase the chances of the woman developing breast cancer in later life.

In 2001, the medical journalist, Dr Thomas Stuttaford wrote: “breast cancer is diagnosed in 33,000 women in the UK each year; of these, an unusually high proportion had an abortion before eventually starting a family. **Such women are up to four times more likely to develop breast cancer.**”^{xxv}

Abortion advocates speak of abortion as being ‘safe’, but the whole purpose of abortion is to destroy a human life – only 50% of patients who enter an abortion clinic come out alive. As a representative from BPAS explained during a debate at the Cambridge University Forum in October 2001: “there is no happy ending for a foetus in an abortion. We kill it. That’s our job.”

“In medical practice, there are few surgical procedures given so little attention and so underrated in its potential hazards as abortion,” Dr Warren Hern, abortion doctor.^{xxvi}

- In the US there were 34 recorded abortion deaths in 1989 alone.^{xxvii}
- 159 women in England and Wales died as a result of legal abortion between 1968 and 1985.^{xxviii}
- Between 10% and 40% of women in the UK who request abortion carry the STI chlamydia, (often without realising it) and the number is on the increase. During the abortion, the infection is carried into the womb via the abortionist’s instruments and can cause pelvic inflammatory disease. The possible complications caused by this condition include infertility, chronic pelvic pain, menstrual disturbance and ectopic pregnancy.^{xxix}
- The risk of ectopic pregnancy may increase up to 30% after a first abortion and 160% after 2 or more.^{xxx} The risk of miscarriage and premature birth may also increase after an abortion.

Norma McCorvey, otherwise known as Jane Roe of **Roe versus Wade**, the court case that legalised abortion in the US, tried to have the case re-opened 30 years later. She presented evidence from over **1000** women who had been hurt by abortion but the judge dismissed the case without even considering the 5,437 pages of evidence.

- Although most abortions are carried out on grounds of danger to the mother's mental health, representatives of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Drs Oates and Kumar stated that in their expert opinion there was no psychiatric justification for abortion.^{xxxii}
- Teenagers who have abortions are 10 times more likely to commit suicide than average.^{xxxiii} Women who abort are 6 times more likely to commit suicide.
- 70% claim that they would not go through another abortion^{xxxiii}
- 40% of women suffer increased anxiety levels up to 5 years after an abortion.^{xxxiv}
- Half a million women in the US are thought to be affected by Post Abortion Trauma, a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Symptoms include:
 - Depression/suicidal thoughts
 - Guilt
 - Grief
 - Broken relationships
 - Drug/alcohol abuse
 - Self-harm
 - Panic attacks
 - Disturbed sleep

Abortion providers and campaigners sometimes speak of abortion as a 'difficult' and even a 'distressing' experience but one that a mature and responsible woman will be prepared to go through under certain circumstances. Pro-life groups offer life giving alternatives with a great deal of support.

Women hurt by abortion turn to the pro-life movement often because there is no one else prepared to listen.

"Society today denies women who have had abortions the 'permission' to grieve." Margaret Cuthill, Co-ordinator, British Victims of Abortion (BVA)

The calls on the BVA helpline show that many women display symptoms of Post-Abortion Trauma (PAT) which is a type of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many girls and women benefit from free Post-Abortion counselling support and information provided by BVA.

6 POPULATION CONTROL, POLITICAL CONTROL

The Myth of Overpopulation

There are just over 6 billion people in the world today. Problems are not caused by the number of people but by the actions of people. Poverty and hunger are caused by war, political instability, corruption and the greed of the privileged few, not by overpopulation.

- ✓ If farmers used the best available agricultural methods, enough food could be produced to provide 35.1 billion people with a US style diet, six times the current world population.^{xxxv}
- ✓ The world has sufficient resources to provide an adequate diet as well as fibre, rubber and beverages for 40 billion people.^{xxxvi}
- ✓ Only 11% of the world's land surface is currently used for agricultural crops. In 1993, the World Bank stated that the world's land and water use for agriculture could more than double.^{xxxvii}
- ✓ There is not a single country in Europe with positive population growth. This means that Europe's population is getting older and that there will not be enough young people around to support the older generation when they retire.

The Promotion of Abortion in developing countries

Abortion does not solve the problem of poverty. It deprives a developing country of its workforce. In countries with a strong tradition of extended family, it robs the elderly of the support provided by large families. Western governments pour millions of dollars into funding abortion and other 'reproductive health' programs, claiming that there are 'huge unmet needs' for them, whilst the concerns of the local populations go unheard:

- In a study carried out in Ghana in 2001, participants were more concerned about programmes to prevent diseases such as malaria and measles and the provision of clean water than the provision of abortion. Ironically, the only form of birth control that was repeatedly asked for was Natural Family Planning, the only system that is not enthusiastically funded by western governments. For more information about the study, go to: <http://www.pop.org/main.cfm?id=125&r1=2.00&r2=2.00&r3=.08&r4=>
- When the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) launched a comprehensive population control programme during the war in Kosovo, it was discovered that the refugees were not interested in population control.^{xxxviii} However, population control provision for refugees was given priority over shipments of urgently needed health supplies.^{xxxix}
- Population control programmes are sometimes imposed upon countries as part of an aid package. An Albanian Ministry of Health official, dealing with Kosovar refugees, was quoted in early 1999 as saying: "we have accepted international aid on condition of reducing births."^{xl}

Women in developing countries should be provided with the means to care and provide for their children rather than being told how many children they should or should not have. Aid agencies should be funding aid without strings attached. Western governments and funding bodies have no right to impose their agendas and value systems upon developing countries.

Political Control

It is in the interests of western governments to keep the populations of developing countries down. As far back as 1974, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, suggested in a memorandum^{xli} that it was necessary for US strategic, economic and military interests to limit the growing population of developing countries. He proposed a plan to reduce average family size worldwide to 2 children per couple and to ensure that UN institutions adopted the policy as a condition of US aid so that the US would not appear to be directly involved.

Forced Abortion in China

Although there are claims to the contrary, forced abortion is well documented in China and is even enshrined in Chinese law. In spite of banning female infanticide and legally protecting women who bear female children, the law refers to occasions ‘when a wife terminates gestation as required by the family planning programme’. Chinese law also affirms a woman’s right to bear children... ‘in accordance with relevant regulations of the State’ which permit a woman to give birth to one child and possibly two if the first is a girl.^{xlii}

When the Population Research Institute investigated allegations of forced abortion in China, they spoke to numerous women who had been forced into abortions by family planning officials and who had tried to resist. The study found that many who refused to have an abortion were heavily fined, had their homes destroyed, faced arrest or saw their relatives arrested because they had broken the one-child law.

The 2003 US Congress report on human rights in China noted: “Violence against women (including imposition of a birth limitation policy coercive in nature that resulted in instances of forced abortion and forced sterilization), prostitution, and discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and minorities continued to be problems.”^{xliii}

When Sven Burmester, the UNFPA representative in Beijing was quoted in a national UK newspaper as saying: "For all the bad press, China has achieved the impossible. The country has solved its population problem" he did not point out that the ‘bad press’ he was referring to included reports of babies being drowned in paddy fields by family planning officials or of pregnant women forced into hiding. Nor was any mention made of the evidence given by Gao Xiaoduan, a former family planning official, who told a US congressional committee in 1998 that heavily pregnant women were often forced to have abortions. Most recently, a woman was reported to have died while trying to escape from officials who were attempting to sterilise her.^{xliv}

The UNFPA and International Planned Parenthood (IPPF) have been involved with China’s one-child policy since 1979, supported by UK and US government funding. The Chinese Family Planning Association is affiliated to IPPF and IPPF has not only praised China’s family planning policies but admitted (without apology) that the China Family Planning Association has done the authorities’ dirty work for them: “Volunteers sometimes collect the occasional fine when a couple breaks the birth plan rules.”^{xlv} So, every now and then, IPPF’s affiliate has economically crippled a family in the name of population control.

The UNFPA claims to have played no part in China’s coercive abortion policies but abuses go on in regions where the UNFPA is known to operate and in one region, the UNFPA shared desk space with the Chinese family planning officials.

Sex Selective Abortion: *Eliminating women in the name of women's rights*

Abortion is constantly being portrayed as something that liberates women, but the worst form of discrimination caused by abortion is against women. In some countries, aborting babies because they happen to be girls has become such a problem that there are far too few women, creating catastrophic social problems.

India

In India today, so many baby girls are being aborted that the male/female ratio has gone down to 793 females to every 1000 males in some northern regions. In parts of Punjab and Haryana it is as low as 600 females for every 1000 males. There are villages where girls have not been born for years, meaning that India is 'missing' some 40 million girls. Five million unborn baby girls are thought to be aborted in India every year, even though sex selection abortion is technically illegal.

As a result, India is suffering from what one journalist described as "the spectre of a society with a huge population of sexually frustrated bachelors preying on women because, after decades of female foeticide, there are not enough to go around."^{xlvi} With a growing number of men unable to find a wife, abuses against women are growing, including wife sharing, violence and rape. Dr B S Dahiya, a government official warned: "Violence against women is rising. We'll have more unnatural practices, such as brothers sharing a wife. In a few years, no woman will be safe. There will be abductions and rapes, even of minors." In some places it would seem, abortion is creating societies in which women are increasingly unsafe, not just in the womb but at all stages of their lives.

China

China is suffering from a similar problem, with ultrasound machines being used to identify baby girls who are then aborted. As a result, male-populated "bachelor villages" are growing up as millions of men find themselves unable to marry. In spite of a government ban on sex selective abortion in 1995, boys outnumber girls by 140 to 100 in some regions and China has 41 million more males than females.^{xlvi}

Abuses are becoming more widespread, such as baby trafficking. In July 2004, a Chinese court convicted 52 people of baby smuggling after police raided a bus and found 28 babies hidden in travel bags, one of whom had died of cold. The babies sold by the smuggling ring were mostly girls. As a result of the one-child policy, couples who want a boy often sell baby girls who are then bought by other couples as future brides for sons. As the BBC reported: "All over China there are poor villages full of boys who have little chance of ever finding a wife."^{xlvi}

In August 2003, the director of a psychiatric hospital was arrested for allegedly drugging and selling female patients as brides to men desperate to find a wife. The report in The Guardian explained: "China has 70 million bachelors unable to find wives."^{xlvi}

7 THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT

The Work of the Pro-Life Movement

- Campaigning

SPUC, along with other pro-life campaigning organisations, works through parliament to prevent anti-life laws being passed and to campaign for the passing of laws that protect human life at all stages of development. The SPUC division No Less Human campaigns against eugenic abortion and promotes the equal status, worth and rights of disabled people born and unborn, most importantly the right to life.

- Education work

SPUC produces literature and trains speakers to raise awareness about the humanity of the unborn child in schools, parliament, hospitals, places of worship and the media.

- Welfare

SPUC will always try to help any woman facing a crisis pregnancy to find adequate housing, financial and emotional support. SPUC's sister organisation British Victims of Abortion offers support to women who have been hurt by abortion. Charities such as LIFE are the biggest non-governmental providers of housing for pregnant women in need. Pro-life groups in the UK provide safe housing, counselling services, post-abortion support and fund hospices for sick children, through the generosity of thousands of volunteers and fund-raisers around the country.

Myths about the movement

- Pro-lifers are against women

The first feminists were pro-life. A large section of the pro-life movement's support base in the UK is made up of women and many of the most committed pro-life activists are women.

- Pro-lifers are against science

Pro-life arguments against abortion are based on the scientific fact of the unborn child's humanity. SPUC, like other pro-life organisations, supports ethical scientific research, which does not harm or degrade human life. There are many scientists, doctors and gynaecologists who hold the pro-life position and there are even pro-life groups run specifically for members of the scientific and medical communities.

- Pro-lifers are violent extremists

The isolated incidents of abortion clinics being attacked are not carried out by mainstream pro-life groups and are not representative of the pro-life movement. Every civil rights movement has an extremist fringe. Some suffragettes were prepared to use violence in the name of votes for women, a minority of activists in South Africa and North America resorted to terrorism in the fight for racial equality. This does not mean that the movements themselves were not peaceful or that their beliefs were wrong. SPUC campaigns in a peaceful law abiding way to raise awareness of their concerns and would never resort to violence.

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QUIZ

1) WHEN DOES THE HEART START TO BEAT?

- a) 20 weeks after fertilisation
- b) At birth
- c) At about the same time the baby starts moving around
- d) From between 17-23 days

2) HOW MANY ABORTIONS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE UK SINCE 1967?

- a) 400,000
- b) 3 million
- c) over 6 million
- d) just under a million

3) HOW EARLY CAN A BABY REMEMBER SOUNDS?

- a) About eighteen months after birth
- b) 20 weeks after fertilisation
- c) 10 weeks after fertilisation
- d) One month after birth

4) WHAT ARE THE MAIN GROUNDS GIVEN FOR ABORTION IN THE UK?

- a) Rape
- b) Abuse
- c) Social reasons
- d) Financial reasons

5) HOW MANY CELLS DOES A BABY HAVE AT BIRTH?

- a) Unknown
- b) Approximately one million
- c) Just under 20 million
- d) About 2,000,000,000,000 cells

6) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION CAN CAUSE AN EARLY ABORTION?

- a) Condom
- b) Morning after pill
- c) IUD
- d) Mini-pill

7) AT WHAT STAGE CAN A BABY DREAM?

- a) Six months after birth
- b) One month before birth
- c) Eighteen months after birth
- d) 20 weeks or 5 months after fertilisation

8) UP TO WHAT STAGE CAN A BABY WITH A DISABILITY BE ABORTED?

- a) Any time up to birth
- b) Up to 24 weeks after fertilisation
- c) Up to 12 weeks after fertilisation
- d) Not at all

9) WHAT DOES THE WORD 'FOETUS' MEAN?

- a) unborn offspring
- b) collection of cells
- c) pregnancy
- d) product

10) WHICH COUNTRY HAS A 'ONE CHILD POLICY'?

- a) India
- b) China
- c) Ghana
- d) The Netherlands

11) WHEN IS THE EARLIEST THAT A BABY CAN SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE WOMB?

- a) When the heart starts beating
- b) 15 weeks after fertilisation
- c) 22 weeks after fertilisation
- d) Only after nine months gestation

12) NAME TWO GROUPS WITHIN SPUC

- a) No Less Human
- b) SPUC International division
- c) SPUC Evangelicals
- d) SPUC Life League

13) WHEN DOES THE BABY FIRST RESPOND TO TOUCH?

- a) 12 weeks after fertilisation
- b) 8 weeks after fertilisation
- c) 6 weeks after fertilisation
- d) 17 weeks after fertilisation

14) WHICH OF THESE RELIGIOUS DOCUMENTS CONDEMN ABORTION?

- a) The Didache
- b) Evangelium Vitae
- c) Church and the Nation
- d) The Atharva Veda

15) WHAT IS THE NAME GIVEN TO A HUMAN BEING AT ITS EARLIEST STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT?

- a) Foetus
- b) Zygote
- c) blastocyst
- d) infant

16) APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE THERE IN THE WORLD TODAY?

- a) 23 billion
- b) 11 billion
- c) 6 billion
- d) 3 billion

17) WHEN DOES THE BABY START TO MOVE AROUND ENERGETICALLY?

- a) six months after birth
- b) one week after birth
- c) at approximately thirty weeks after fertilisation
- d) as early as 9 weeks after fertilisation

18) WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE POSITIVE POPULATION GROWTH?

- a) All of them
- b) None of them
- c) France and Germany
- d) UK, Sweden and Spain

19) WHEN IS THE COLOUR OF THE BABY'S EYES DETERMINED?

- a) at fertilisation
- b) after implantation
- c) the colour may change up to a year after birth
- d) by week 11

20) WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE COURT CASE THAT LEGALISED ABORTION IN THE USA?

- a) McCorvey versus Bolton
- b) IPPF versus US
- c) Kissinger versus Nixon
- d) Roe versus Wade

21) AT WHAT STAGE ARE ALL ORGANS (EXCEPT LUNGS) PRESENT?

- a) 30 weeks after fertilisation
- b) 22 weeks after fertilisation
- c) 15 weeks after fertilisation
- d) 6 weeks after fertilisation

22) AT WHAT STAGE CAN A BABY CRY?

- a) Immediately after birth
- b) Up to five hours after birth
- c) 30 weeks after fertilisation
- d) 17 weeks after fertilisation

ANSWERS

1) d

2) c

3) b

4) c

5) d

6) All of them except a

7) d

8) a

9) a

10) b

11) c. This is the average but there are some babies who have survived even earlier.

12) a and c

13) c

14) All of them do

15) b

16) c

17) d

18) b

19) a. The colour of the eyes does often change after birth but eye colour is determined at fertilisation along with the rest of the genetic make up.

20) d

21) d

22) d