



Catholics Vote Catholic

CATHOLIC COALITION OF NEW MEXICO

Quick Facts About Abortion Hard Cases & Arguments Against Exceptions

1. Number of women in the U.S. who become pregnant due to sexual assault

Reliable estimates are hard to come by. The U.S. Department of Justice reports for 2007, rape cases reported totaling 69,850¹. RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) estimates for the 2004-2005 period that there were 3,204 pregnancies resulting from sexual assaults. This estimate is highly questionable because it is not based on government or law enforcement statistical reports or any other hard evidence.

It is more likely that the actual number of pregnancies due to sexual assaults is much less. According to a reliable source, Dr. John C. Willke, M.D., President of the Life Issues Institute, sexual crimes are grossly under-reported by as much as 50% based on the findings of the U. S. Department of Justice. This would double the rape cases reported in the 2007 period to 140,000. Dr. Willke reports that on average only 1-2 per 1,000 rapes result in pregnancies which would indicate for the period studied, a more realistic estimate of pregnancies from sexual assaults ranges from 140-280.

There are widely accepted reasons why rapes result in a lower incidence of pregnancies which Dr. Willke's foundation and RAINN agree on. The major reasons, according to Dr. Willke's study include:

1/3 of the women are too old or too young to get pregnant; a women is fertile an average of only 3 days out of a 30 day cycle; 1/4 of American women of child-bearing age have been sterilized; 15% of American men are sterile; 15% of women are on the pill or are already pregnant; psychic trauma of the rape substantially reduces the possibility of pregnancy; even if she conceives, because of the terrible emotional trauma the miscarriage rate is higher for victimized women than in a normal pregnancy.²

2. Percentage of abortions performed on victims of rape and incest

1.5% estimated of total annual abortions (1,200,000/year)

3. Percentage of abortions for rape, incest, and health of the mother:

13.5% - 12% for health, 1% for rape, .5% for incest.

4. Arguments against abortion for rape and incest cases

“Rape is a horrendous crime, leaving a woman in a state of mental, physical, and emotional turmoil. When a woman becomes pregnant as the result of rape (which happens less than 1 percent of the time), abortion will not take away the trauma, the nightmares, the pain-but it may add to them. According to a survey conducted by Dr. David Reardon of the Elliot Institute in 1990, the psychological complications of abortion include guilt, nervous disorders, nightmares, and memory loss (over 100 psychiatric reactions in all). Additionally, if there was a pre-existing disordered state (like rape), abortion may cause a worsening of psychological functioning.

“Because of problems with our justice system, rapists often walk free without punishment, while the child conceived in rape may suffer the ultimate injustice-abortion without the benefit of a trial or defense.

“Unfortunately, abortion supporters have argued for abortion in cases of rape at the expense of the emotional, physical and mental stability of thousands of women, as well as the lives of children.

“No, abortion is not okay in cases of rape. It still results in the death of a child and damages the physical, emotional and psychological health of a woman.”³

“Furthermore, the anguish and psychic suffering caused by rape and incest has been treated quite effectively. Professor Stephen Krason points out that...’psychological studies have shown that, when given the proper support, most pregnant rape victims progressively change their attitudes about their unborn child from something repulsive to someone who is innocent and uniquely worthwhile.’”⁴

“(Rape and Incest exceptions in abortion law) are bad policy because preborn children are human beings, and because the 14th Amendment requires equal protection under the law, they cannot be denied their right to life on the basis of parentage or any other arbitrary classification. To include rape and incest exceptions destroys the constitutional argument for protection of the preborn.

The rape exception

“With a crime so brutal and so offensive to society as rape, the temptation is strong to eliminate anything-even a child-that brings it to mind.

“Yet, if innocent life is to be protected, the child conceived by rape must be allowed to live.

“The preborn child is not responsible for the crime committed against his or her mother. If aborted, this child would receive a punishment far greater than anything meted out to the rapist. The baby would be sentenced to death for the criminal act of his or her father.

“The ordeal of a woman who carries the child of a rapist cannot be minimized. However, a woman who aborts her child conceived by rape only compounds her trauma. Abortion does not erase the emotional scars of the rape-and where there was one victim, there now are two.

“That rape rarely results in pregnancy is well documented in studies nation-wide. In Louisiana, the Department of Health and Hospitals reports that in 1988, of 15,367 abortions performed in the state, only two were performed for reasons of rape or incest.

“But the fact that very, very few pregnancies result from rape would not necessarily mean that very, very few abortions would take place under a rape exception.

“A rape exception could lead a pregnant woman desirous of an abortion to make a false report to law enforcement officials. Norma McCorvey, the now famous "Jane Roe" of Roe v. Wade, who admits that she lied when claiming that her child was conceived by rape, is one example of this possibility. A rape report would have to be investigated, requiring many hours of work. The abortion, however, would be completed long before the investigation.

“A rape exception would raise an additional problem. The woman impregnated during rape would face a second victimization from her attacker-he could defend himself by alleging that the woman is claiming rape only to obtain an abortion.

The incest exception

“Incest is similar to the crime of rape in that it victimizes innocent persons.

“With incest, as with rape, justice demands that a child not be punished for the sins of his or her father; and clearly, the abortion of a child of incest would not take away the anguish, shame, and pain of the woman who was victimized.

“Further, abortion does not end any form of abuse. In the case of incest, abortion actually empowers the abuser.

“Incest frequently involves multiple violations of minors that continue unreported for years. Abortion in these cases is more of a convenience for the man involved because the evidence of his crime is destroyed. After the preborn child is aborted, the incest can again proceed undetected, while the young woman suffers further devastation.

“What the victim of incest needs is not abortion, but intervention-a third party to help her.

“Finally, because some cases of incest involve blood relatives and such because unions are more likely to produce a disabled child, the question arises, Should physical disability be a criterion for destroying a preborn human being?

“Our laws do not discriminate against born humans because of their disability (or, for that matter, their parentage). Likewise, there is no justifiable basis for so discriminating against the preborn.

Conclusion

“The children of rape and incest have nothing to warrant death. Their mothers, who have suffered physical violation and mental anguish, are victims of tremendous injustice. Thus, the answers to rape and incest must include compassionate assistance to the victims, prosecution of the criminals, and protection for the rights of all involved- including the preborn. Justice demands no less.”⁵

5. Why not allow abortion for rape and incest pregnancies?

“We must approach this with great compassion. The woman has been subjected to an ugly trauma, and she needs love, support and help. But she has been the victim of one violent act. Should we now ask her to be a party to a second violent act -that of abortion? Unquestionably, many would return the violence of killing an innocent baby for the violence of rape. But, before making this decision, remember that most of the trauma has already occurred. She has been raped. That trauma will live with her all her life. Furthermore, this girl did not report for help, but kept this to herself. For several weeks or months, she has thought of little else. Now, she has finally asked for help, has shared her upset, and should be in a supportive situation.

“The utilitarian question from the mother’s stand-point is whether or not it would now be better to kill the developing baby within her. But will abortion now be best for her, or will it bring her more harm yet? What has happened and its damage has already occurred.

“She’s old enough to know and have an opinion as to whether she carries a “baby” or a “blob of protoplasm.” Will she be able to live comfortably with the memory that she “killed her developing baby”? Or would she ultimately be more mature and more at peace with herself if she could remember that, even though she became pregnant unwillingly, she nevertheless solved her problem by being unselfish, by giving of herself and of her love to an innocent baby, who had not asked to be created, to deliver, perhaps to place for adoption, if she decides that is what is best for her baby. Compare this memory with the woman who can only look back and say, “I killed my baby.”⁶

“Rape or incest engenders sympathy, and rightly so, for the victim. However, sympathy and concern should be confined to helping and healing the victim; caring for her and the innocent life within her. Caring for the victim cannot justify killing innocent life whether or not the woman, now a mother, desires an abortion. Murder is not a solution, even if the mother at such a distraught time believes it is.

“While abortion may seem to some like the best course of action for a mother after being assaulted, there is growing evidence that abortion harms the victim physically, psychologically and spiritually in the long term.”⁷

“Studies show that incest victims rarely ever voluntarily agree to an abortion. Instead of viewing the pregnancy as unwanted, the incest victim is more likely to see the pregnancy as a way out of the incestuous relationship because the birth of her child will expose the sexual activity. She is also likely to see in her pregnancy the hope of bearing a child with whom she can establish a true loving relationship, one far different than the exploitive relationship in which she has been trapped.

"Julie Makimaa, conceived by an act of rape, works diligently against the perception that abortion is acceptable or even necessary in cases of sexual assault. While sympathetic to the suffering her mother endured at the hands of her attacker, Julie is also rightfully proud of her mother's courage and generosity. Regarding her own view of her origin, Julie proclaims: 'It doesn't matter how I began. What matters is who I will become.'"⁸

6. Regarding exceptions to protect the life and health of the woman requiring abortion: Is abortion every medically necessary?

“In the event that the mother's life is threatened, we must remember that there are two patients involved. Every possible effort must be made to save both.

“There are virtually no conditions that threaten the mother's life in which abortion is a medically recognized treatment. In some conditions (e.g., an ectopic pregnancy or a cancerous uterus) a treatment may be required which indirectly kills the preborn. But in such cases, the treatment does not legally or morally qualify as an abortion. When removing a cancerous uterus, the intent is to save the mother; every effort to save the child should still be made. Thus even if the child dies, the treatment is still fully justified. The death of the child was never INTENDED. In contrast, for an abortion the intent is always the same: to kill the preborn child.”⁹

“Abortion is never necessary to save a mother's life.

“It is important to distinguish between direct abortion, which is the intentional and willed destruction of a preborn child, and a legitimate treatment a pregnant mother may choose to save her life. Operations that are performed to save the life of the mother—such as the removal of a cancerous uterus or an ectopic pregnancy that poses the threat of imminent death—are considered indirect abortions.

“They are justified under a concept called the "principle of **double effect**." Under this principle, the death of the child is an unintended effect of an operation independently justified by the necessity of saving the mother's life.

“Essentially, both mother and child should be treated as patients. A doctor should try to protect both. However, in the course of treating a woman, if her child dies, that is not considered abortion.”¹⁰

According to the Association of Pro-Life Physicians, "When the life of the mother is truly threatened by her pregnancy, if both lives cannot simultaneously be saved, then saving

the mother's life must be the primary aim. If through our careful treatment of the mother's illness the pre-born patient inadvertently dies or is injured, this is tragic and, if unintentional, is not unethical and is consistent with the pro-life ethic. But the intentional killing of an unborn baby by abortion is never necessary.

"Most of what passes as a therapeutic, or medically-necessary abortion, is not necessary at all to save the mother's life. For example, if a mother has breast cancer and requires immediate chemotherapy to survive that can kill the baby, the physician will frequently recommend a therapeutic abortion. Another example: if a mother has life-threatening seizures that can only be controlled by medication that will kill or severely deform her unborn child, the physician will frequently prescribe a therapeutic abortion. **In both of these cases, the abortion is not necessary to protect the mother's health.** The necessary medication may injure or kill the pre-born child, but this is no justification for *intentionally* killing the child. If the child is injured or dies from the medication prescribed to the mother to save her life, the injury was unintentional and, if truly medically necessary, not unethical."¹¹

Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in America. Alan Guttmacher, former Planned Parenthood president wrote in 1967:

*"Today it is possible for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal disease such as cancer or leukemia, and if so, abortion would be unlikely to prolong, much less save the life of the mother."*¹²

We can understand clearly then that the hard case exceptions to legalize abortion everywhere and keep it legalized are powerful propaganda tools used by the abortion lobby to maintain and expand their industry, a billion dollar business built on lies and deception.

7. Dispelling the Myths: What do victims and children of rape victims say about abortion?

Rebecca Keissling is a popular pro-life speaker, attorney, and author whose personal testimony is inspirational and worthy of our attention. Rebecca is one of many who was conceived in rape. She has put up a powerful [website](#) which has compiled many life-affirming stories of men and women who were conceived in rape and/or incest:

"According to the research of Dr. David Reardon, director of the Elliot Institute, co-editor of the book *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions and Children Resulting From Sexual Assault*, and author of the article "[Rape, Incest and Abortion: Searching Beyond the Myths](#)¹⁰," most women who become pregnant out of sexual assault do not want an abortion and are in fact worse-off after an abortion. So most people's position on abortion in cases of rape is based upon faulty premises:

- 1) the rape victim would want an abortion,
- 2) she'd be better off with an abortion, and

3) that child's life just isn't worth having to put her through the pregnancy. "I hope that my story, and the other stories posted on this site, will be able to help dispel that last myth."¹³

“Why do even pro-lifers talk about exceptions for rape and incest as if that is a way to have ‘compassion’ for the mother? If you really want to be compassionate ... give this mother the opportunity to choose life.”

Denise, Incest Victim, Victim of a Forced Abortion¹⁴

“I feel personally assaulted and insulted every time I hear that abortion should be legal because of rape and incest ... we’ve not been asked to tell our side of the story.”

Kathleen DeZeeuw, Rape Survivor, Mother¹⁵

Forced Abortion in America¹⁶

Assault victims often report that someone else made the abortion decision for them. The pressure to abort can escalate to violence or even murder.

Teens have been taken to clinics for forced abortions and returned to their rapists.

64% of women surveyed after abortion report feeling pressured into unwanted abortions.

FOOTNOTES

¹U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Victimization in the U.S. 2007 Statistical Tables, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cvus07.pdf>

² *Why Can't We Love Them Both*, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, abortionfacts.com, Chapter 29 - Rape
http://www.abortionfacts.com/online_books/love_them_both/why_cant_we_love_them_bot_h_29.asp

³ *Is abortion okay in the case of rape?*, American Life League
[http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10221&search=rape and incest](http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10221&search=rape_and_incest)

⁴ Stephen M. Krason, *Abortion: Politics, Morality, and the Constitution* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), p. 284. For an overview of the research, see Sandra Kathleen Mahkorn, "Pregnancy and Sexual Assault," in David Mall and Walter F. Watts, M.D., *The Psychological Aspects of Abortion* (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1979), pp. 67-68.
<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-sum/q-life005.html#7>

⁵ *Rape and Incest Exceptions to Abortion Law*, by Judie Brown, September 30, 2005
[http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10042&search=rape and incest](http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10042&search=rape_and_incest)

FOOTNOTES (continued)

⁶ *Why Can't We Love Them Both*, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, abortionfacts.com, Chapter 29 - Rape
http://www.abortionfacts.com/online_books/love_them_both/why_cant_we_love_them_both_29.asp

⁷ *What about the hard cases - rape, incest or the life of the mother? Shouldn't abortion be allowed under these circumstances?* Judie Brown, American Life League
<http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10242&search=rape>

⁸ *Rape, Incest and Abortion: Searching Beyond the Myths* by David C. Reardon, Ph.D.
www.afterabortion.org/rape.html

⁹ American Life League
<http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10242&search=rape>

¹⁰ *Abortion is never necessary to save a mother's life*, American Life League
<http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10216&search=double%20effect>

¹¹ *Are There Rare Cases When an Abortion Is Justified?* Association of Pro-life Physicians, Official Position Statement, APP, May 26, 2010.
www.prolifephysicians.org/rarecases.htm

¹² Alan F. Guttmacher, "Abortion—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," in *The Case for Legalized Abortion Now* (Berkeley, Calif.: Diablo Press, 1967).
<http://www.abort73.com/print/191/>

¹³ www.rebeckakiessling.com/Othersconceivedinrape.html

¹⁴ Elliot Institute, Fact Sheet, *The Hard Cases. New Facts. New Answers*
www.AfterAbortion.org
<http://www.theunchoice.com/pdf/FactSheets/HardCases.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid