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 ADVANCING NEW STANDARDS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

ESC
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Consequences for women of receiving or being denied a wanted abortion

Diana Greene Foster, PhD
 Director of Research, Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health
 Professor, UCSF Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences
 University of California, San Francisco

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Teen pregnancy in the United States

- Teen births are declining
- Abortions are declining
- College enrollment is up
- The costs of carrying a pregnancy to term are going up due to ungenerous public assistance.

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Views of pregnant American teenagers

- "I am not finished with my education, not married. Because my childhood was less than awesome, if I do have a child I want to give it the best possible life that I can and I am not in a place to do that right now."
 A 19 year old from Florida
- "I felt that I wasn't old enough, not financially, mental or physically ready to bring a child into the world."
 An 18 year old from North Dakota

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Turnaway Study

What are the experiences of women who carry an unwanted pregnancy to term versus receive an abortion?

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Turnaway Study recruitment sites



Recruit from 30 abortion providers who have the latest gestational limit within 150 miles

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Turnaway Study design

- Recruit three types of eligible women
 - **Turnaways**
 - Up to 3 weeks above gestational limit
 - Do NOT receive abortion
 - **Near Limit Abortion Group**
 - Within 2 weeks of limit
 - Receive procedure
 - **First Trimester Patients**
 - Receive procedure under 14 weeks gestation
- Excludes women seeking abortion for fetal anomalies

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Study methods

- 956 women seeking abortion between 2008 and 2010 including
 - 156 women denied abortions who carried to term
 - 405 women just under limit who receive the abortion
- Follow all women for 5 years with semi-annual telephone interviews
 - Interviews conducted in English and Spanish

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What are the mental health consequences of receiving or being denied a wanted abortion?

Foster DG, Steinberg JR, Roberts SCM, Neuhaus J, Biggs MA. A comparison of depression and anxiety symptom trajectories between women who had an abortion and women denied one. *Psychological Medicine*. 2015 Jan 28:1-10.

Biggs MA, Neuhaus JM, Foster DG. Mental Health Diagnoses 3 Years After Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion in the United States. *Am J Public Health*. 2015 Dec; 105(12):2557-63.

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Depression (BSI)

In the past seven days, to what extent have you felt [loneliness, loss of interest, blue, worthless, hopeless, thought of ending life]?

Predictors	Coef
Turnaway	ns
Months	-0.17***
Ts X months	ns
Months ²	.005***
Ts X months ²	ns

***p<.001

Controls for differences in age, race, marital status, employment, parity, and child abuse and neglect at baseline
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Anxiety (BSI)

In the past seven days, to what extent have you felt [nervous, tense, scared, terror, restless, fearful] (0-24 symptoms)?

Predictors	Coef
Turnaways	0.76*
Months	-0.07**
Ts X months	-0.12*
Months ²	0.002*
Ts X Mths ²	0.004*

*p<0.05, **p<.01

Controls for differences in age, race, marital status, employment, parity, and child abuse and neglect at baseline
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Self-esteem

In the past seven days, to what extent have you felt high self esteem?
 (0=not at all, 3=Moderately, 5=Extremely)

Predictors	Coef
Turnaway	-0.27*
Months	0.02***
Ts X months	.01*

* p<0.05, ***p<.001

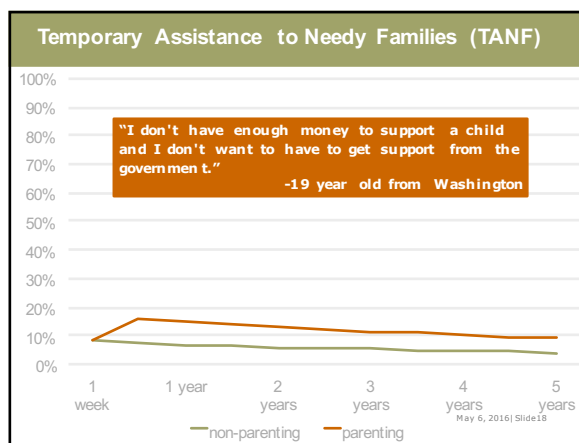
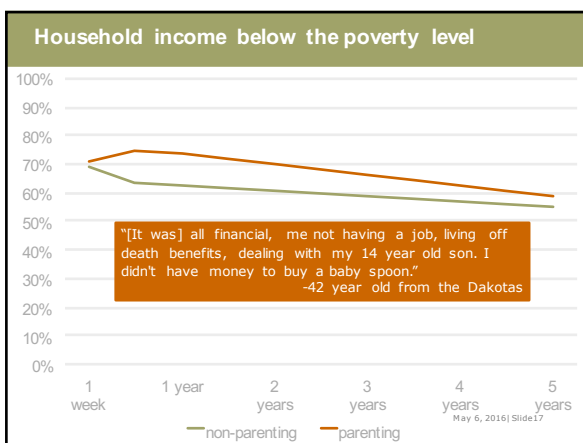
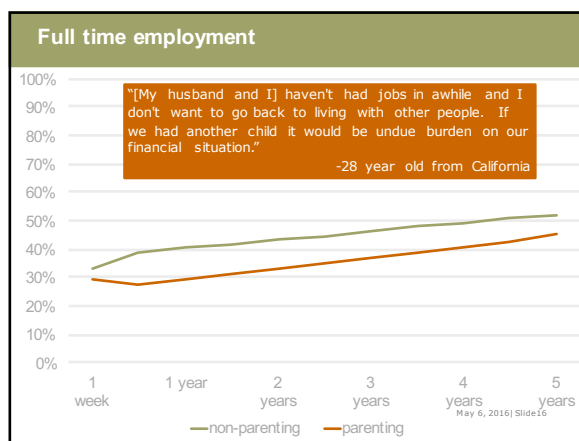
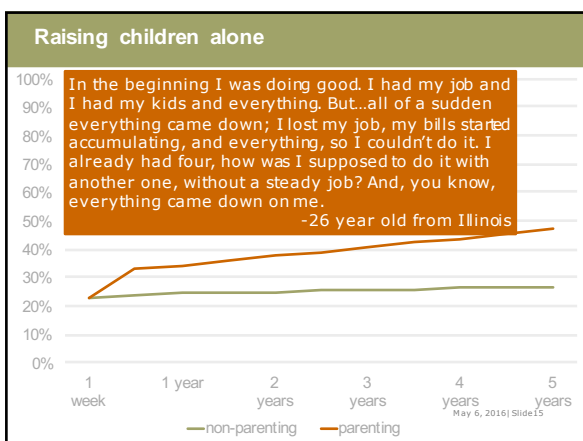
Biggs MA, Upadhyay UD, Steinberg JR, Foster DG. Does abortion reduce self-esteem and life satisfaction? *Qual Life Res*. 2014 Nov;23(9):2505-13.

Controls for differences in age, race, marital status, employment, parity, and child abuse and neglect at baseline
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Why do women have abortions?

Biggs MA, Gould H, Foster DG. Understanding why women seek abortions in the US. *BMC Women's Health*. 2013; 13:29.

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Conclusions

- Large and significant differences in the economic trajectories; women denied abortions faced more hardships than women receiving abortions.
- Public assistance programs mitigate the loss of full-time employment for women denied an abortion who then parent the child.
- Public assistance was not sufficient to support the increase in household size due to the new baby, and households of parenting women were more likely to drop below the poverty level.
- Being denied a wanted abortion is associated with a large increase in the chance that the woman will be raising her children alone, not with family or a male partner.

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Violence and women's access to abortion

Roberts SCM, Biggs MA, Chibber KS, Gould H, Rocca CH, Foster DG. Risk of Violence from the Man Involved in the Pregnancy after Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion. *BMC Medicine* September 2014.

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Violence and Pregnancy

"It is very, very difficult to find a job when you're pregnant, to keep a job when you're pregnant, and to find or maintain a job with a baby especially if your partner ...doesn't want to help. So ... domestic violence skyrockets because you're ... financially dependent on your partner because you have to be home with the kid ... Where you're like, oh no ... I can't be homeless with this kid ... I need him for money type of thing, ... Pregnancy is an incredibly scary thing especially if you cannot trust the person you're with."

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What happens to women's existing children when they receive or are denied a wanted abortion?

Foster and Biggs. In progress.

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Large differences in poverty

- Over five years, children whose mothers received an abortion were much less likely to be in poverty than children whose mothers carried an unwanted pregnancy to term.
- No differences in health/caregiving
 - Injuries in the past 6 months
 - Residency with the mother
 - Caregiving
 - Asthma

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Child development (PEDS: DM)

Existing children to women denied an abortion have 4% lower scores across all six domains of child development (p<0.05) compared to children whose mother received a wanted abortion

Domain	Turnaway Children better off	Turnaway Children worse off
expressive language	~0.9	~0.8
fine motor	~0.9	~0.7
gross motor	~0.9	~0.8
receptive language	~0.9	~0.8
self help	~0.9	~0.7
social emotional	~0.9	~0.8

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Implications of the Turnaway Study

- Abortion does not hurt women.
- Women who carry unwanted pregnancies to term may need additional support.
- Women can make decisions that are right for themselves and their families.

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Turnaway Study researchers

M. Antonia Biggs, Social Psychology
 Diana Greene Foster, Demography
 Caitlin Gerds, Epidemiology
 Heather Gould, Public Health
 E. Angel Aztlan-James, Nursing
 Katrina Kimport, Sociology
 Lauren Ralph, Epidemiology
 Sarah Roberts, Public Health
 Corinne Rocca, Epidemiology
 Ushma Upadhyay, Public Health

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Turnaway Study Team


Principal Investigator
 Diana Foster, PhD

Project Director
 Rana Barar, MPH

Research Coordinator
 Heather Gould, MPH

Project Coordinator
 Jasmine Powell

Also thanks to
 Selena Phipps Adetunji
 Mattie Boehler-Tatman
 Janine Carpenter
 Loren Dobkin, MSN
 Undine Darney
 Michaela Ferrari
 Jay Fraser
 Ivette Gomez
 Emily Hendricks
 John Neuhaus
 Debbie Nguyen
 Selena Phipps
 Brenly Rowland
 Claire Schreiber
 Danielle Sinkford
 Sandy Stonesifer
 Elisete Weiss



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