

Most Women Don't Regret Having an Abortion, Study Says

Those who felt guilt, anger or sadness immediately after the procedure report that these feelings declined dramatically.

January 14, 2020 By [Alicia Green](#)

In one of the largest studies of its kind, a majority of women expressed that they felt relieved and without regrets after having a pregnancy terminated, according to [findings](#) published in the journal *Social Science & Medicine*. These new findings debunk decades-long claims that women would experience negative emotions over time, reports [CNN](#).

For their inquiry, investigators surveyed nearly 1,000 women in 21 states and followed up with them 11 times during a five-year period. Scientists first surveyed the women a week after their abortion and every six months thereafter.

Five years after having an abortion, 84% of women said they felt positive about their decision even if they didn't feel that way at the time compared with 6% who expressed mostly negative feelings. A little over half of the women said deciding to terminate their pregnancy was "very difficult," 27% expressed that it was "somewhat difficult" and 46% said the choice to get an abortion wasn't difficult at all.

Nearly 70% said they worried about being stigmatized if people knew about their abortion. These women and those who struggled with the decision experienced higher rates of guilt, anger or sadness immediately following the procedure. However, these feelings declined significantly after just one year.

At the end of the survey, women in all the groups involved in the study said they felt relieved about their abortion, the emotion they used to describe how they felt each time they were asked about the choice to end their pregnancy.

"All the claims that negative emotions will emerge over time, a myth that has persisted for decades without any evidence to substantiate these claims, it's clear it's just not true," said Corinne Rocca, PhD, MPH, an epidemiologist and assistant professor in the department of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at the University of Southern California, San Francisco and an author of the study.

Rocca expressed surprise that despite how women felt prior to having an abortion their relief continued even five years after while the other feelings diminished.

For related coverage, read "[The Handmaid's Tale Today](#)" for a discussion about what might happen if women lost their say-so regarding reproductive rights.

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