

Effects of Abortion on Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The legalization of abortion increases sexual activity. Abortion removes the result of sexual intercourse—conception—that previously discouraged individuals from engaging in sexual behavior outside of marriage. Increased sexual activity outside of marriage led to a significant increase in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

A simple natural experiment shows the rise of STDs due to the legalization of abortion.¹⁾ The incidence of STDs (reported and treated) in states legalizing abortion was compared to the incidence of STDs in non-legalizing states. Early legalizing states (subsequent to their legalizing abortion) show an increased number of gonorrhea cases (a “step up” in cases). Non-legalizing states show an increase in gonorrhea cases, but the rate of increase is significantly more modest (no “step up”). This difference persists until 1973 (the year of abortion legalization across the United States due to *Roe v. Wade*), when the difference disappears.

Legalizing abortion creates other social costs, by STD transmission, by changing sexual behavior. Epidemiological costs, including those of short-term and ongoing treatment, are not included in the estimated \$70 billion to \$135 billion loss of economic activity (valued work) each year due to abortion legalization.²⁾ Nearly a quarter of gonorrhea and syphilis cases are being created by legalized abortion alone.³⁾ Depending on specific pathology, this spread occurs as well in other sexually transmitted diseases. These diseases have their own social and medical costs.

¹⁾ ³⁾

Jonathan Klick and Thomas Stratmann, “The Effect of Abortion Legalization on Sexual Behavior: Evidence from Sexually Transmitted Disease,” *Journal of Legal Studies* 32 (2003): 407-433.

²⁾

Assuming an average income of \$14,000 to \$27,000 per aborted worker per year times 5 million lost persons who would be working now gives \$70 billion to \$135 billion per year lost in valued economic activity (work). The median U.S. income per worker is around \$40,000 per year. \$40,000 is 150 percent of \$27,000. See [Abortion: Decrease of US Population and Effect on Society](#) for how this (much) lower value (median worker having income 50 percent higher than aborted worker) for the average aborted worker is obtained.

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