



Contraceptive Contemplation:

Does contraceptive use really decrease the number of abortions?

Every modern woman knows that artificial contraception helps reduce the number of abortions, right? Sure, it's logical: if more women use contraception, there will be fewer unintended pregnancies; which means there will be fewer abortions. Let's put the brakes on this logic for a moment and look at what scientific research is telling us.

A study conducted over a ten year period in Spain interviewed women about their contraceptive use. The authors found that contraceptive use increased 30% over this period with 49.1% of participants reporting use of some form of contraception in 1997 and 79.9% of participants reporting contraceptive use in 2007. As contraception rates increased in Spain so did the number of abortions. The number rose from 5.52 per 1000 women in 1997 to 11.49 per 1000 women in 2007 (or from 49,578 total abortions in 1997 to 112,138 total abortions in 2007). Sadly, the authors reported that there were actually more abortions in 2007 than live births with 10.5 live births per 1000 women and 11.49 abortions per 1000 women.

The authors' answer to this troubling trend was to suggest that more contraception (such as emergency contraception) would help bring down the abortion rate.

In light of the data the authors present, this is certainly paradoxical logic: giving women more contraception in order to bring down abortion rates when increased contraceptive use correlates with

increased abortions. There must be some other more sound logic out there that can reverse this trend in the abortion rates.

Indeed, there is a more sound logic offered by the Catholic Church that our world should consider:

- 1) if human life is considered sacred from conception until natural death, the abortion rate will decrease;
- 2) if we adopt this above logic and sex is considered a sacrament shared only between two people who have pledged a lifetime commitment to each other in marriage, there will be fewer "unwanted" pregnancies and the abortion rate will decrease.

The prevailing paradoxical logic of the world towards sex, contraception and abortion may seem too large at times to overcome but, pardon me for the cliché; this tide really can be shifted one person at a time. By committing ourselves to teaching our children the sound logic of life offered by the Church and arming ourselves with information (such as was presented above) to gently correct the misinformed in our small circle of friends and acquaintances, then we will begin to affect change (slow as it may be) in our world.

"Trends in the Use of Contraceptive Methods and Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy in the Spanish Population during 1997-2007."
Contraception 83 (2011): 82-87.

Thanks to summary in Current Medical Research Winter /Spring 2011 at usccb.org.

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