Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding why women seek abortions in the US in their own words

Version: 2 Date: 2 February 2013

Reviewer: Stanley Henshaw

Reviewer's report:

General comments

This is a clear descriptive article based on excellent survey data that sheds new light on the reasons women decide to terminate an unwanted pregnancy by abortion. The methods are straightforward and appropriate.

Minor essential revisions

Please read over the article carefully and correct a few minor errors. For example, on page 10, seventh line from the bottom, “women” should be “woman”. On page 12, first complete paragraph, something is missing at the end.

P. 3: There is no reference to Reference 11, which should be included among the studies mentioned in the second complete paragraph. I think there are five, not four studies.

P. 10, Financial reasons: You say that 15% of the 40% have certain characteristic, whereas in most of the rest of the Results section you percentages are apparently based on all respondents, not a subset. To reduce confusion, you should base all percentages the same way, either on the subgroup, or preferably, on the entire sample. If the entire sample, you could add a footnote explaining that all percentages are calculated this way. Otherwise it isn’t always clear.

Discretionary revisions

P. 4, first complete paragraph: It is not clear how disparities in access would cause an increase (or smaller decrease) in abortions to poor women.

In the discussion or somewhere, there should be a short discussion of the possible effect of the low response rate (37.5%) and of the reasons you think this would not seriously bias the results.

The quotes from respondents all have the ID number in parentheses. I am not sure this is needed by readers.

P. 17: Not wanting to give a baby up for adoption isn’t really a reason for abortion. Obviously none of the women having abortions wanted adoption.

In Factors Related to Reasons for Abortion, in some paragraphs you name the factors first and at the end of the sentence say what reason it relates to. It would
be easier for the reader (though maybe more tedious) if you always start with the reason and then name the factors. For example, instead of saying “Women who had lower pregnancy intentions score ... had significantly higher odds of reporting that it was not the right time for a baby...”, you could say “Women who said it was not the right time for a baby had lower intention scores and lower parity than other women.”

Were all the independent variables in the logistic regressions dichotomized (age, pregnancy intention, parity)?

P. 21: Although it is true that abortion restrictions could put women’s lives at risk, this is too strong a statement for the average reader unless you provide support.

P. 22: A woman who has an abortion because of pressure from others might be making the right decision for her if having a baby means she will lose the support of her parents or partner. It is unrealistic to say that no woman should be pressured into terminating a pregnancy.

Table 1 and text: If you know how many women are receiving public financial support (welfare, TANF), it would be useful to have that information in the table and text.

Table 2: “Don’t want to repeat childhood” would be clearer with other wording such as “Don’t want her children to have a childhood like hers.”


**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests.