Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceived stress and emotional social support among women who are denied or receive abortions in the United States: a prospective cohort study

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Version: 2 Date: 8 February 2014

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To the editors of BMC Women’s Health:

We submit for your consideration an original research article entitled *Perceived stress and emotional social support among women who are denied or receive abortions in the United States: a prospective cohort study*. This article investigates the trajectories of perceived stress and emotional social support among women over 30 months following abortion seeking.

We found that women who were denied abortions were initially more stressed than women who received abortions near facilities’ gestational limits, and that women who received first trimester abortions were initially less stressed than women who received abortions near the facilities’ gestational age limits. Stress levels for the groups converged over time, and all groups ended with lower perceived stress than their initial levels. Social support for all groups started at similar levels and increased slightly for all groups over the 30-month period.

This article is a significant addition to the literature about abortion, childbirth and women’s psychosocial well-being. Studies on this subject are especially important given the narrative that abortion hurts women, which has gained popular traction but is not supported by this analysis or by other sound research. The prospective cohort design of this study overcomes many of the methodological flaws common to this literature by including appropriate comparison groups and by avoiding issues such as underreporting of abortions, recall bias, inadequate control of confounders, and inadequate information on whether the outcomes of interest occurred after the abortion. Moreover, perceived stress and social support are important aspects of psychosocial well-being and have been understudied in this context. Given their range of effects on physical and mental health, understanding more about these outcomes has important implications for clinical practice.

We believe that this article will be of particular interest to the readers of BMC Women’s Health, and we would be honored to have our article published through your journal.

This manuscript has not been previously submitted elsewhere, nor will we submit elsewhere while it is under your review. We understand and accept the editorial policies of BMC Women’s Health, and look forward to your consideration.

Sincerely,

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