

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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Reclaiming Fatherhood A Multifaceted Examination of Men Dealing With Abortion”

While the impact of abortion on men is below the cultural radar, there is overwhelming research, clinical experience and anecdotal evidence that a father can be profoundly traumatized by the elective loss of his child whether he encouraged it, resisted it, or only learned about it after the fact.

Recently San Francisco was the site of the first international conference on men and abortion November 28-29, 2007. Four men shared their stories of how abortion has impacted their lives, followed by some of the foremost experts in research in this area presenting their research, including Drs. Vincent Rue and Catherine Coyle.

Men are the hidden partners in every abortion decision. More than 40 million abortions have occurred in the U.S. alone since 1973. The man's role (or lack thereof) in the decision can create a stream of consequences that may accompany him through the rest of his life. Because men are told they have no say in the abortion decision- it is all about a woman and her choice- they later struggle with questions they pose to themselves and the emotions they feel. Men often say "I don't feel entitled to my grief. It was her choice. Why do I feel so bad?"

There is a myth in society that men don't care. People seem to believe that men are only involved in abortion decisions as forcers or abandoners. The belief is that men are untouched by the experience and are simply sperm donors who then walk away. In some cases that might be true; however, during the conference we listened to the four men's stories and learned that the scenarios are often not that simple. The law and the societal expectation that abortion should only be a woman's issue and decision has perhaps kept some men from speaking what is in their heart.

Society has told men that they have no right to grieve or struggle with the abortion decision. However, some men hurt a great deal after the abortion. The men pinpointed the abortion event as a turning point that marked the beginning of the end of the relationship with their partner. Other men are confused by their feelings and the issue may not come to the surface until many years later. Some of these men identify risk-taking, and chemical / alcohol use or abuse as related to the abortion experience.

Men's pain after an abortion experience may not just be psychological. Anthropologists in primitive cultures have long recognized that men often experience symptoms of pregnancy along with their wives. It is called "couvade" a word that comes from the French verb couvrir meaning "to hatch or to brood." Estimates are the 20% to 80% of

western culture men may experience couvades. Possibly set off by the perception of pheromones (scent molecules of affiliation that send messages about our reproductive status), it appears that males respond to the scent of a fertile woman by elevated testosterone and arousal. Males also seem to be able to perceive a non-fertile female, including a pregnant woman. The bottom line is that something seems to signal her state to her partner and perhaps his body responds hormonally to the message. Men are changed by a pregnancy experience. A pregnancy might trigger significant changes in the male that may impact his reaction to an abortion loss. There is research showing that pregnancy might have a biological impact on the male as well as on the female.

Emotionally, men are more likely to deny their grief or internalize their feelings of loss rather than openly express them. However when men do express their grief, they try to do so in culturally prescribed "masculine" ways: through anger, aggressiveness, and control. Men typically grieve in a private way following an abortion. Because of this, men's requests for help may often go unrecognized and unheeded by those around them.

For more information visit the website: <http://www.menandabortion.info/>

More Adult Stem Cell Research Successes in 2007

Excerpts from an article by David Prentice,
William L. Saunders, and Michael Fragoso

2007 brought continuing advances using adult stem cell research and therapy. Currently, peer-reviewed studies have documented over 1400 FDA approved trials for 73 different conditions in humans where patient health has been improved through adult stem cell therapy. Below are summaries of some of the developments and treatments during 2007.

Heart Tissue Regeneration

Doug Rice of Otis Orchards, Washington, was diagnosed with congestive heart failure eight years ago. Diabetes prevented him from receiving a heart transplant.

Facing the possibility that he would suffer fatal heart failure, Rice flew to Thailand to receive an experimental adult stem cell therapy through the company TheraVita. Stem cells were isolated from Rice's blood in a lab in Israel and differentiated into angiogenic cell precursors, and transferred back into Rice's heart.

So far, TheraVita has treated over 100 patients, 80 of whom have seen improvement, with the remainder holding steady. In Rice's case, the results were immediate, with his heart increasing to 41 percent efficiency from 11 percent before the procedure. According to Rice, "I've been around a lot of people with bad hearts. I know if they looked at [adult stem cell therapy], it might save their lives. I firmly believe it saved mine."

Osiris Therapeutics has also begun using adult stem cells to treat heart patients. Their "easy to administer" adult stem cell treatments have been given to recent heart attack victims, who have seen their hearts pump blood 25 percent more efficiently on average, when tested at both three and six months intervals following the procedure.

The procedure is done intravenously, raising the possibility it could be widely and easily

used at local hospitals. Marc Penn, director of the Bakken Heart Brain Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, says of the new therapy, "It's very exciting, perhaps a sea-changing trial for the field... offering the chance of an off-the-shelf-product."

Bodo-Eckehard Strauer is the director of the cardiology department at Dusseldorf University Hospital, has used bone marrow stem cells to treat over 300 heart patients. In September 2007, Dr. Strauer used adult stem cells on a patient "on the verge of dying" following a severe heart attack. After seven weeks in intensive care, the patient received a transplant of his own bone marrow adult stem cells, and his condition improved. This seems to be the first time that cardiogenic shock has been treated by adult stem cells. Dr. Strauer calls it a "global innovation."

Type 1 Diabetes

Jaider Furlan Abbud is one of 13 patients who were the first to be successfully treated with adult stem cells for Type 1 Diabetes. Dr. Abbud and the other patients participated in a clinical trial led by researchers from Northwestern University and Brazil. Dr. Abbud became insulin-free after receiving treatment that included an adult stem cell transplant using his own blood stem cells.

Bone Cancer

Carol Franz has survived two bouts of multiple myeloma -- a cancer of the bone marrow -- because of adult stem cell transplants. In 2003, when Franz first was diagnosed with the disease, the only way to keep the cancer from destroying her bone structure was to undertake five months of aggressive chemotherapy.

Then Franz had some of her blood removed, and her adult stem cells were isolated. Next Franz was given additional chemotherapy treatment. Her adult stem cells were then transplanted back to her withered bones, which regenerated.

Three years later Franz was again diagnosed with multiple myeloma, and again was treated with her adult stem cells. To this day she is healthy and cancer free.

Nerve Regeneration

Dr. Paul Kingham of the United Kingdom Centre for Tissue Regeneration in Manchester and his team announced in October that they were able to transform isolated adult stem cells from human fat tissue into nerve cells. They expect to isolate more such stem cells and use them to create artificial nerves. According to Dr. Kingham, "The differentiated stem cells have great potential for future clinical use, initially for treatment of patients with traumatic injuries of nerves in the arms and the legs."

Liver Cancer

Scientists at the University of Dusseldorf have successfully taken bone marrow stem cells from liver cancer patients and used them to regrow liver cells in their patients. Two years after the procedure, six of the eight patients have healthy livers.

Neurological Disease

At the University of California, Irvine, scientists used adult stem cells in restoring the

memory of mice. Lead researcher, Mathew Blurton-Jones, said of the finding, "This is one of the first reports that you can take a stem cell transplantation approach and restore memory ... There is a lot of awareness that stem cells might be useful in treating diseases that cause loss of motor function, but this study shows that they might benefit memory in stroke or traumatic brain injury, and potentially, Alzheimer's disease."

For the entire article and references for source documents, see <http://www.lifenews.com/bio2300.html>

California Students for Life News

By Mary Ho, CASTL Director

(This month we begin a new feature, which we hope will become a monthly column of news from pro-life collegians here in California.)

California's pro-life college groups are especially active during the month of January in remembering the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. For the fourth year in a row, a sea of solemn white crosses stood in White Plaza of Stanford University on January 22, as Stanford Students for Life (SSFL) held their annual memorial, "Remembering the Victims of Roe v. Wade." The memorial stood from 8 AM to 4 PM. For more information about SSFL, please visit <http://prolife.stanford.edu>.

Berkeley Students for Life (BSL) hosted their 4th Annual Celebrate Life Week from January 28-31 and featured Dr. Mary Davenport, one of the few pro-life gynecologists in California. For more information about BSL, please visit <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~bsl/default.htm>.

California Students for Life (CASTL) is a non-partisan, non-religious coalition of California collegiate pro-life groups, including Notre Dame de Namur University, Santa Clara University, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and University of Southern California. For further information, please visit <http://castudentsforlife.blogspot.com> or contact CASTL Director, Mary Ho at castudentsforlife@gmail.com.

Juno – The Movie

Another movie with a "pro-life" theme is playing in local theaters. "Juno" Rated PG-13 promotes the option of adoption over abortion. Like Bella, which has touched the heart of millions with its beautiful presentation of appreciating human life, this movie also touches on another facet of the pro-life choices a pregnant woman has.

The movie addresses many of concerns of pregnant teens including:

- * The pregnancy - including "telling the parents" and peer support
- * The abortion option
- * Sidewalk counseling can make a difference (Imagine an abortion seeking student meeting a sidewalk counselor who just happens to be a classmate outside the abortion mill as she arrives!)
- * The adoption option

Juno MacGuff, a sixteen year old suddenly finds herself pregnant after a tryst with her

best friend. She decides to will "nip [the problem] in the bud" and heads off to a local abortion business, where she meets a pro-life classmate/sidewalk counselor who tells her about the development of her unborn child. She describes the development of her baby, mentioning that the baby even has fingernails!

We then see Juno in the abortion mill where she receives a less than hospitable welcome, and the sidewalk counselor's comments replay in her mind.... *sidewalk counseling does have an impact! (Keep it up fellow sidewalk counselors!)*

Once Juno decides to not abort the precious pre-born, she and a friend read a Penny Saver ad placed by a couple looking to adopt a baby. Juno then tells her parents the news of her pregnancy. The parents' discussion afterwards is worth the price of admission. Even movie critics who are not entirely pro-life have written positively about the movie. Jack Mathews of the New York Daily News writes that the pro-life theme in the movie doesn't offend his pro-abortion views. "If Cody (writer) and Reitman (director) have a pro-life agenda, it didn't offend this pro-choice critic. Juno does have choices and makes one, without prejudice." A true "Pro-Choice" movie! For a moment of light comedy go see the movie Juno.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(For the latest information, see www.calendarforlife.org)

Cinema Vita Film Festival

Friday March 7, 2008 6 to 10 PM. Delancey Street Theater, 600 Embarcadero, San Francisco. For submission guidelines and other information on sponsorships, timetable and prizes, please visit the website at www.cinemavita.org or call 415-387-2324.

Students for Life Annual Conference

Save the date – April 26, 2008 "California Students for Life's Celebrate Life Conference entitled "Empowering Student Groups" Stanford University. More details to follow in future newsletters.