



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on December 17, 2015

Is The Abortion Rate Really Lower Than Ever?

Earlier this month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics released a report showing that the U.S. abortion rate is lower than ever. The CDC has been tracking the abortion rate since 1976, according to the report's lead author, Sally Curtin. She said, "Abortion has been on a nearly steady decline since the rate peaked in 1980." Sadly, there is more to it than that. The report does not take into account things like the "Plan B" pill and the birth control pill, both of which can cause an abortion.

Vital Signs



As CBS News [reports](#):

The pregnancy rate also hit an all-time low in 2010, according to the report.

Many factors likely contribute to the reduction in abortions, but increased use of highly effective birth control is one of the most important trends, said report co-author Kathryn Kost, principal research scientist at the Guttmacher Institute, a sexual and reproductive health think-tank.

Kost also said, "Across the states, the rate of unintended pregnancy is going down. That suggests that fewer women are getting pregnant when they don't want to. It's happening across the board, and affects the birth rate and the abortion rate." Her statement is only true if the Guttmacher Institute's definition of "pregnant" is correct. In a [paper](#) entitled *The Implications of Defining When a Woman Is Pregnant* on the institute's website, Rachel Benson Gold writes:

The question of when life begins is an eternal one, debated by philosophers and theologians for centuries, and likely destined to forever elude consensus. However, on the separate but closely related question of when a woman is considered pregnant, the medical community has long been clear: Pregnancy is established when a fertilized egg has been implanted in the wall of a woman's uterus. The definition is critical to distinguishing between a contraceptive that prevents pregnancy and an abortifacient that terminates it. And on this point, federal policy has long been both consistent and in accord with the scientists: Drugs and devices that act before implantation prevent, rather than terminate, pregnancy.

In the introduction to the paper, she says, "The differences may be more than academic. Debates over emergency contraception have put the question on center stage, with potentially serious implications." She is correct in that. If pregnancy begins at fertilization instead of implantation, then preventing implantation is an abortion. That means that pills — such as the popular Plan B — can cause an abortion. Plan B's website explains on its "[How Does It Work](#)" page:

It works mainly by:

- Stopping the release of an egg from the ovary

It is possible that Plan B One-Step® may also work by:



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- Preventing fertilization of an egg (the uniting of sperm with the egg)
- Preventing attachment (implantation) to the uterus (womb)

So, Gold avoids the issue by separating pregnancy by one more step. She says that fertilization may *cause* pregnancy; but pregnancy does not *begin* until implantation occurs.

Miriam-Webster defines “pregnant” [differently](#): Having a baby or babies developing inside the body. So the question really is, “When is it a baby?” Ob-Gyn Susan Warhus, M.D. [says](#):

When a woman becomes pregnant, first, fertilization happens — the sperm and egg come together. Then implantation occurs — the fertilized egg implants in the womb. Different groups disagree on whether pregnancy starts with fertilization or implantation.

She then goes on to explain the different ways in which various birth control methods work before addressing the question of whether preventing a fertilized egg from implanting is a type of abortion:

Many in the medical and scientific communities, including The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, presume that pregnancy begins with implantation. Therefore, they don’t view contraception as abortive.

She concludes by saying, “The contraception decision is ultimately a personal one. It comes down to your attitudes concerning the definition of pregnancy, your conclusions about the facts, and your own moral and ethical beliefs.”

So, while the medical industry — which is by and large pro-abortion — defines “pregnant” as the implantation of a fertilized egg to the wall of the uterus, the issue is not settled by that definition. If life begins at conception (when the egg is fertilized by a sperm) — as many doctors say, then anything that terminates that life is an abortion. That would include anything that prevents implantation.

In his 1998 [book](#), *Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?*, Randy Alcorn says:

Some forms of contraception, specifically the intrauterine device (IUD), Norplant, and certain low-dose oral contraceptives, often do not prevent conception but prevent implantation of an already fertilized ovum. The result is an early abortion, the killing of an already conceived individual. Tragically, many women are not told this by their physicians, and therefore do not make an informed choice about which contraceptive to use.

He later [wrote](#):

As it turns out, I made a critical error. At the time, I incorrectly believed that “low-dose” birth control pills were the exception, not the rule. I thought most people who took the Pill were in no danger of having abortions. What I’ve found in more recent research is that since 1988 *virtually all oral contraceptives used in America are low-dose, that is, they contain much lower levels of estrogen than the earlier birth control pills*. [Emphasis in original.]

His conclusion: All birth control pills have the ability to prevent implantation and are therefore abortive. His book, and his conclusions, have the endorsement of many respected physicians and medical professionals. Twelve of those physicians are listed in the 10th edition of his book, revised in 2011.

Patrick D. Walker, M.D., professor of pathology, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, wrote:

By carefully detailing the available medical information concerning the abortifacient effects of oral contraceptives, Randy Alcorn has developed a logical and thoughtful challenge to every prolife



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person. The conclusions of this study are scientifically accurate. Birth control pills usually prevent pregnancy, but sometimes they cause an abortion. Questions? Objections? Randy has addressed them in a gentle but firm way. This is the manner in which the often fiery debate over prolife subjects should be carried out — unemotionally, intelligently and quietly. The evidence is before us ... ‘How should we then live?’

Paul L. Hayes, M.D., board certified fellow of the American College of Obstetricians/Gynecologists agrees:

From medical textbooks and pharmacy references, to statements from the Pill-manufacturers themselves, this book proves, beyond any doubt, the abortion-causing action of birth control pills. This book should be read by everyone interested in knowing the truth.

While Rachel Benson Gold of the Guttmacher Institute may be right that “the question of when life begins is an eternal one” that may be “likely destined to forever elude consensus” from a scientific perspective, she is wrong in stating that there is consensus in the medical community that “pregnancy is established when a fertilized egg has been implanted in the wall of a woman’s uterus.”

The implications are huge. If it is true that life begins when sperm meets egg, then it is also reasonable to conclude that whatever prevents that fertilized egg — which is a small human being — from implanting in the womb would be an abortifacient. That means that abortions are not at an all-time low; they may be at an all-time high.



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