

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PROLIFE
OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS

Dr. Charles B. Hammond
President, ACOG
May 2001

Dear Dr. Hammond and ACOG Officers,

We would like to express our congratulations to you, Dr. Hammond, as the new president of ACOG. We are aware of, and respect, your reputation as a physician, scientist and educator. We look forward to working with you in pursuit of the highest standards of health care for the women of this country.

As the largest special interest group of ACOG we are concerned with aspects of women's healthcare relating to long-term implications of induced abortion. It has come to our attention that current ACOG educational material summarily dismisses the existence of any potential long-term complications of induced abortion. Specifically, the **ACOG 2002 Compendium of Selected Publications**, states on page 392, "Long term risks sometimes attributed to surgical abortion include potential effects on reproductive function, cancer incidence, and psychologic sequelae. However, the medical literature, when carefully evaluated, clearly demonstrates no significant negative impact on any of these factors with surgical abortion."

Yet, with regard to breast cancer, 28 of 37 international studies, including 13 of 15 American studies (8 with statistical significance), suggest that there is a 30% increased risk of breast cancer for women who have had elective abortions. Therefore, 75% of the

world's scientific studies on the subject (including 86% of the American studies) are at serious variance with this statement from ACOG. (See enclosed references).

These study findings have frequently been dismissed on the basis of a presumed "recall bias" despite good evidence to the contrary. Breast cancer clearly represents a serious threat to women's health and well being, and is a condition of great concern to our patients. If, in fact, the preponderance of the world's scientific literature on this topic has *any* validity, the ACOG statement on this topic represents a most serious disservice to the very women it purports to serve.

As a scientific College, ACOG can surely do a better evaluation of the data on this important topic. Fully 75% of the world's scientific literature on this subject suggests a real danger of increased breast cancer risk subsequent to induced abortion. Simply dismissing these concerns on the basis of a presumed recall bias is unfitting for a distinguished scientific organization such as ACOG.

We urge you to insist upon the highest standards of scientific integrity in dealing with this body of literature as it pertains to ACOG publications and public statements. This is especially important in light of the current controversy surrounding this scientific data. Intellectual honesty calls for a thorough reevaluation of these studies by a balanced panel of individuals known for both integrity and skillful scientific analysis. The women whose health we serve deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. DeCook, MD, VP AAPLOG,

Representing the AAPLOG Executive Committee and Board of
Directors