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## Women deserve better

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By Pia de Solenni

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*"What women don't know does hurt them."  
– Germaine Greer*

She should know. When she published "The Female Eunuch" in 1972, Germaine Greer advocated a life based on sexual license as the path to personal fulfillment. Greer practiced what she preached in 1972. As a result, she could no longer have a child because her several abortions left her sterile and suffering from other gynecological health problems.

Almost 30 years later, at age 50, she wrote "The Whole Woman." While not completely changing her pro-choice stance, Greer argues that abortion is a sign, not of liberation, but of oppression.

Evidence of the abuses conducted within and by abortion clinics confirms Greer's view.

In April 1998, Lou Anne Herron hemorrhaged to death three hours after the abortion of her 26-week-old unborn child. She was still at the A-Z Women's Center when she died. Clinic staffers waited until they could barely perceive a heart beat to call 911. Dr. John Biskind, who had performed the abortion, left the clinic earlier even though he knew his patient was still bleeding excessively.

Prior to Herron's death, seven lawsuits filed locally named the clinic, Biskind and clinic owner Dr. Moshe Hachamovitch. By this time, Biskind had already miscalculated the fetal age of another unborn child and delivered the 26-week-old girl alive. Despite his history of incompetence, Biskind was still performing abortions when Herron sought his services in 1998.

In another example, former abortion provider Carol Everett recalls the time a 21-year-old patient "danced in" to get her "problem taken care of." Everett was assisting in the abortion when the doctor punctured the patient's uterus and pulled her bowel through.

ABC's "20/20" interviewed Dr. Brian Finkel in 1999. Although Dr. Finkel himself performed abortions, he admitted that the majority of abortions are done by doctors who have "as marginal a facility as possible to maximize profit."

Later, Finkel himself was charged with 67 sex crimes against his patients. After the first indictment, the district attorney's office received calls from more than 100 women alleging abuse from Finkel.

Isolated incidents or just the tip of the iceberg? It might shock many Americans to learn that such information is hard to find. The U.S. currently has no mandatory abortion reporting requirements, but anecdotal evidence and personal testimonies increasingly portray a situation that is anything but pro-woman. Despite the incidents of malpractice and abuse, the \$90 billion abortion industry remains largely *unregulated*.

Prior to *Roe vs. Wade*, abortion advocates argued that legalized abortion would be safer for women because it would be regulated. But from the beginning, the safety of women having abortions was not tracked.

One would think that after all the hype about safe and legal abortion, abortionists would be ready and willing to prove how "safe" it is. However, in 1978 – just five years after abortion was legalized – a Chicago Sun-Times report on the Chicago-area abortion industry found that, although the Illinois Department of Public Health gave statistics on the age, race and marital status of every woman who received an abortion in the area since 1973, it did *not* provide information on abortion-related deaths. Thus, it was impossible to know whether *Roe* had actually made abortion safe for women.

Between 1984 and 1994, IDPH was prohibited from mandating abortion reporting by a temporary restraining order. Today, pursuant to court order, IDPH cannot make public the number of abortion deaths per year unless it is greater than 50. Apparently, the needless deaths of 51 women would be cause for concern, but 50 would not. It's impossible to judge whether a procedure is safe if all deaths from the procedure need not be reported.

Data collection for abortion-related deaths is not governed by a consistent, uniform standard. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention collects abortion statistics on a *voluntary* basis from state and local health departments and medical care providers. In a 2000 abortion surveillance report, complete information for key states like California and Florida is not included. According to the pro-abortion Alan Guttmacher Institute, about 20 percent of all abortions in the U.S. take place in California. The "Morbidity and Mortality" report of the CDC data gives no information on abortion-related deaths and injuries.

Currently, veterinary clinics in the state of New York are required to follow more guidelines than abortion clinics. For instance, a woman who decides to have an abortion will be attended by a clinic worker who may not even satisfy the criteria necessary to handle her dog at an animal hospital.

The California Senate is currently considering a bill to remove the provision that only a holder of a physician's and surgeon's certificate may perform abortions. The bill sets no criteria for uncredentialed abortion providers, putting women in danger yet again.

Despite the rhetoric that accompanied *Roe vs. Wade*, abortion today is unsafe and unregulated, marked too often by injured and dying women, unregulated clinics, and uncertified practitioners.

Abortion is legal – but Greer and others bear the scars, which show it isn't safe. Like Greer, we should ask just how pro-woman abortion really is if the industry isn't even subject to basic regulation.

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