

ABORTION SECRETS & ABORTION MISPERCEPTIONS

Sarah K. Cowan; New York University

Abortion and Miscarriage in the United States

- Similar:
 - Ways pregnancies end
 - Can be kept secret: first trimester events
 - Common events:
 - 20% of recognized pregnancies end in abortion; 12-14% in miscarriage
 - 1 in 3 women will have an abortion; 1 in 4 for miscarriage

Centers for Disease Control; Jones and Kavanaugh (2011)

Sarah K. Cowan

Secrets and Misperceptions

Abortion and Miscarriage in the United States

- Similar:
 - Women of all sub-populations
 - Having had a miscarriage is a near-random event
 - Abortion patients comparable to women of childbearing age on:
 - Religion
 - Religiosity
 - Motherhood
 - Marital status
 - Education
 - (Over-representations of black, Hispanic and poor women)
- Different
 - Levels of Stigma
 - Social disapproval for abortion in nearly every context

Jones et al (2010) Cockrill and Weitz (2010)

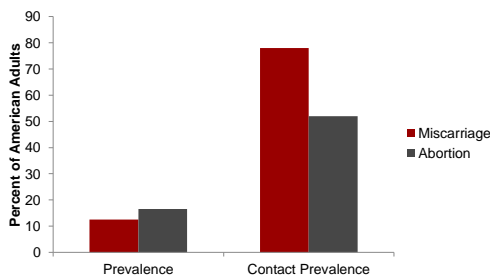
Sarah K. Cowan

Secrets and Misperceptions

Contact Prevalence

- Number of people in a community who personally know someone with a given condition
- "Do you know anyone who _____?"
- Function of:
 - Prevalence of a given trait
 - Concentration of that trait in certain communities
 - Social network size and structure of those communities
 - Recall
 - Disclosure and secret-keeping patterns (for concealable traits)

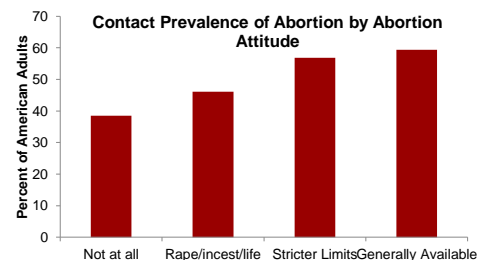
Miscarriage has Higher Contact Prevalence



Sarah K. Cowan

Secrets and Misperceptions

Pro-Choice Hear Abortion Secrets

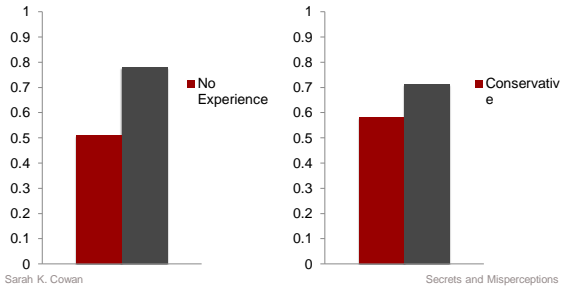


Sarah K. Cowan

Secrets and Misperceptions

The Stigmatized and the Wise

Predicted Probability of Knowing Someone Who Has Had an Abortion by R's Own Experience & Attitude



Why does it matter?

- Experiences we have & the experiences we hear of others' influence us
 - ▣ Contact hypothesis
- Have experience with or in-contact with abortion
 - ▣ Think more patients are mothers
 - ▣ Think more patients attend religious services often
 - ▣ Endorse more reasons why women have abortions