

Glossary

amenorrhea the absence, temporary or permanent, of menstrual periods.

amniocentesis a diagnostic procedure in which a small amount of amniotic fluid is withdrawn from the amniotic sac (the membranous bag that surrounds the fetus in the uterus). This fluid can be used for diagnosis of a fetal genetic abnormality by examination of cells shed by the baby into the fluid.

Asherman's Syndrome intra-uterine adhesions (scar tissue connecting the inner walls of the uterus), a complication of surgical curettage, as in a D&C or abortion.

borderline personality disorder a condition characterized by impulsive and self-destructive behaviors of the kind potentially magnified by abortion.

carcinogens any agent capable of causing cancer such as, chemicals and high-energy radiation, including nuclear radiation and X rays.

cardiomyopathy any disease of the heart muscle that causes a reduction in the force of heart contractions and a resultant decrease in the efficiency of circulation of blood through the lungs and the rest of the body.

cervical incompetence abnormal weakness of the cervix (the neck of the uterus) that can result in recurrent pregnancy loss.

cervical os entrance to the uterus from the cervix.

cervical resistance a stiffness of the neck of the uterus, making it difficult to expand.

Chlamydia trachomatis a strain of chlamydiae (a group of microorganisms that cause infectious diseases in humans and animals) which causes genital infections, including sexually transmitted diseases.

chorionic villi sampling tissue taken from the edge of the placenta and analyzed in the laboratory to diagnose possible abnormalities in the fetus; sampling of the chorionic villi is a possible alternative to amniocentesis and can be performed earlier in the pregnancy.

coding the way hospitals report patients' diseases or disorders. On discharge, doctors write the diagnosis and hospital clerks categorize it according to a list or code.

cognitive dissonance a term used in psychology referring to the intellectual difficulty in reconciling seemingly contradictory propositions.

denial a psychological term referring to a refusal to acknowledge.

dilation and curettage (D&C) a gynecological procedure in which the lining of the uterus is scraped away to diagnose and treat disorders of the uterus. It can also be used for a first-trimester abortion.

dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortion, specifically in the second trimester, in which the uterine cervix is dilated by instrumentation or medication, to allow the uterine contents, including the embryo or fetus, to be sucked out with a vacuum aspirator.

dysmenorrhoea pain or discomfort during or just before a menstrual period.

dysphoria adverse emotional state.

dyspareunia pain during sexual intercourse (generally in reference to the woman).

ectopic pregnancy a pregnancy that develops outside the uterus, most commonly in the fallopian tube, but sometimes in the ovary or rarely, in the abdominal cavity or cervix; the condition creates a life-threatening situation that requires emergency treatment.

embolism the blockage of an artery or vein by a fragment of material (a blood clot, a bubble of air or other gas, or various other substances) traveling in the bloodstream causing heart problems, strokes, or death.

endometrial adhesions fibrous scar tissue connecting the inner walls of the uterus, a complication of surgical curettage, as in abortion; Asherman's Syndrome.

endometrial ossification see *osseous metaplasia*.

endometriosis a condition in which fragments of the endometrium (lining of the uterus) are located in other parts of the body, usually in the pelvic cavity, sometimes leading to infertility.

endometritis inflammation of the endometrium due to infection which can be caused by complications after abortion.

epidemiological pertaining to disease as it affects groups of people (as opposed to individuals), dealing mainly with epidemics of infectious and non-infectious diseases.

estradiol see **oestradiol** and **(maternal) oestradiol**.

et al. Latin abbreviation used in scientific notation meaning *and others*.

Human Genome Project a multicenter scientific endeavor to map every gene in the human DNA contained within the 46 chromosomes of every human cell.

hypomenorrhea scanty menstrual periods; a reduction in the amount of menstrual flow.

hysterectomy surgical removal of the uterus which can be a form of late-term abortion in pregnant women.

hysteroscopy diagnostic or therapeutic exploration of the uterine cavity with a fiberoptic tube.

hysterotomy opening the uterus, usually with a surgical incision. The best example of this is a Caesarean section to deliver a baby. Now, with early-gestation fetal surgery, surgeons can open up the uterus with a small incision, operate to correct a fetal problem, close up the womb, and allow the balance of the pregnancy to proceed. This procedure can also be used in hospitals and abortion clinics to extract a late-term fetus, thus terminating a woman's pregnancy.

***in vitro* fertilization (IVF)** a method of treating infertility in which an egg is surgically removed from the ovary and fertilized outside the body. *In vitro* (in glass) refers to the glass Petri dish that is used in the fertilization process.

induced abortion deliberate termination of pregnancy, resulting in destruction of the embryo or fetus, by means of a surgical procedure, pharmaceutical product, or other means.

intrapartum hemorrhage bleeding from the uterus or other parts of the birth canal during the process of labor and/or birth.

KCl injection (abortion related) injection of potassium chloride into the bloodstream, including the heart, in a high enough concentration to cause instant death.

Laminaria tents small stick-like devices which absorb fluid, gradually increasing in size. They are inserted into the cervical os over one or two days to create the expansion necessary to remove a large fetus in a late-term abortion.

laparoscopic sterilization obstructing fallopian tubes to prevent fertilization of ovum using small incisions and a fibre optic telescope to direct the instruments.

legal abortion an induced abortion by a licensed medical practitioner and allowed by law.

leiomyosarcoma a cancerous tumor in the smooth muscle of the uterus.

(maternal) oestradiol oestradiol is the most important of the estrogen hormones essential for the healthy functioning of the reproductive system. See also **oestradiol, estradiol**.

medical abortion is a term used for an abortion that is drug-induced; for example, contractions are induced by introducing a prostaglandin hormone into the uterus.

menorrhagia excessive blood loss during menstruation which is caused by a hormone imbalance, fibroids, polyps, an intra-uterine device (IUD), or a pelvic infection.

meta-analysis a statistical method in which data from subjects participating in a number of similar experimental trials are combined and analyzed together, in order to increase statistical power. This is a relatively new epidemiological tool accepted at leading epidemiological centers, including those at McMaster University (Canada) and Oxford University (England), and by the prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*.

morbidity the state or condition of being diseased.

Mullerian tumor a very rare cancerous tumor of the uterus.

multifetal pregnancy reduction (MFPR) termination of one or more fetuses in a multiple-conception pregnancy, usually the result of in vitro fertilization, and achieved by injecting the fetuses with a needle containing potassium chloride (KCl). The dead fetuses remain with the living ones in utero until delivery.

neonatal hypotension low blood pressure in a newborn infant.

nulliparous (woman) a woman who has never borne a child.

oestradiol the most powerful of three female hormones, produced in the ovaries, with small amounts produced in the adrenal glands and testes. It is responsible for the control of menstrual periods and the development of secondary sex characteristics in women.

osseous metaplasia of the endometrium (endometrial ossification) calcium formation in the lining of the wall of the uterus.

parous (woman) a woman who has been pregnant and borne a child.

pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) an infection of the internal female reproductive organs which may be caused by a sexually transmitted disease, other bacteria, an IUD, or after a miscarriage, abortion, or childbirth.

placenta previa the implantation of the placenta in the lower part of the uterus, near or over the cervix.

post-abortion survivor syndrome the symptom complex of one who has suffered psychic trauma from abortion.

post-abortion morbidity disease after an abortion directly related to the abortion procedure.

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) a specific form of delayed anxiety that comes on after a stressful or frightening event.

prenatal a term meaning before birth.

primigravid (woman) a woman who is pregnant for the first time.

prophylactic antibiotics administration of antibiotics in advance of an anticipated medical procedure that might cause bacterial infection.

prostaglandins one of a group of fatty acids that is made naturally in the body and acts in a similar way to hormones; some prostaglandins are prepared synthetically for use as drugs.

recall bias a term used in psychology referring to a bias in answering questions because, although people generally intend to be truthful, they have trouble recalling things they do not wish to think about or admit to.

relative risk (RR) the proportion by which a given procedure or behavior increases or diminishes the risk of contracting a disease where 1.0 is a normal risk. Thus a relative risk of 0.8 means that the risk is twenty per cent less than normal; a relative risk of 2.0 means that the risk is 100 per cent higher than normal, etc.

RU-486 mifepristone; a drug used in medical/drug-induced abortion.

salpingitis inflammation of the fallopian tube, commonly caused by infection spreading upward from the vagina, cervix, or uterus.

secondary infertility inability to conceive after a previous pregnancy.

sepsis infection of a wound or body tissues with bacteria that leads to the formation of pus or to the multiplication of the bacteria in the blood.

sequelae a condition that results from or follows a disease, a disorder, or an injury; the term, used in its plural form, refers to the resulting complications.

seroprevalence rate the prevalence in a population of the occurrence of a certain infectious marker in the blood (i.e., "serum").

sexually transmitted disease (STD) infection transmitted primarily, but not exclusively, by sexual intercourse and sexual touching; can also be transmitted by blood.

spontaneous abortion a medical term for a miscarriage with the loss of a fetus before the end of the twentieth week (in Canada) of pregnancy.

sublimation a psychological mechanism whereby a person diverts their thoughts and feelings about a negative experience.

surgical abortion the most common form of induced abortion, using surgical instruments such as a curette or suction device (aspirator); the method varies with the stage of pregnancy.

symptomology a collection of symptoms of a disease or condition.

synechia uteri uterine adhesions.

systemic affecting the whole body or system.