

A Summary of “Second-Trimester Abortion and Risk of Live Birth” by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

ACOG published “Second-Trimester Abortion and Risk of Live Birth” in the June 2024 edition of *The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, volume 230, issue 6. The Abortion Survivors Network created the following summary of this research.

Method: This was a retrospective cohort study of **13,777 abortions at 15–29 weeks gestation** in Quebec hospitals between April 1, 1989, and March 31, 2021 (approx. 32 years). The **rate of live births per 100 abortions** was calculated. Adjusted log-binomial regression models were used to estimate risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals for the **association of fetal and maternal characteristics** with the probability of live birth.

Results: Overall, **11.2% of abortions resulted in a live birth**. Specifically, labor induction abortions were associated with a 15.4% chance, while **D&E abortions held a 0.2% chance of live birth**. This aligns with ASN’s previous estimates of live births following surgical abortion.

Gestational **weeks 20–24 showed the greatest likelihood for survival at 21.7%**, compared to 3.4%, and 8.5%, for weeks 15–19 and 25–29 respectively. Maternal age also had an effect, as mothers under 25 were only 5.5% likely to see an abortion fail. **Mothers 25–30 were 14.1%, and those 35 or older were 12.6% likely to see their abortion fail and their child survive.**

Another significant indicator for survival was the time period the abortion was performed, with a clear **increase in the rate of survivors in later years compared to earlier years**. The years 1989–2000 saw a 4.1% chance, 2001–2010 a 10.2% chance, and 2011–2021 more than doubled the likelihood of born-alive survivors at 20.8%.

By referencing death certificates, it was determined that just **10% of survivors lived longer than 3 hours**. However, only **a quarter (24.5%) were admitted to the NICU and just 5.5% received palliative care**.

Takeaway: While this study was conducted partially as a way to determine whether feticidal injection lowers the “risk of live birth,” (which it does by 57%) it also revealed in more concrete terms than ever before that babies survive abortion.