RESUMO - BIOÉTICA

MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AFTER INDUCED ABORTION: CLINICAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lara Silveira Barros Lessa (larinhamed7@gmail.com)

Introduction: Induced abortion remains a significant issue in contemporary medicine due to its ethical implications and its potential impact on women's mental health. Understanding these outcomes is essential for responsible clinical practice and patient care. Objective: To evaluate mental health outcomes following induced abortion, with emphasis on depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. Methods: This study is a systematic literature review focusing on mental health outcomes after induced abortion. A structured search was conducted in the PubMed database using the terms (abortion OR "induced abortion") AND ("mental health" OR depression OR anxiety). To complement the search, additional relevant studies were identified through Google Scholar. The search included studies published in English involving human subjects, without restriction on publication year. Inclusion criteria comprised systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and observational studies evaluating mental health outcomes after induced abortion. Exclusion criteria included editorials, opinion articles, and studies not directly related to psychological outcomes. Study selection was performed through screening of titles and abstracts. Due to methodological

heterogeneity among studies, a qualitative synthesis of the findings was conducted. Results: The analyzed studies suggest that induced abortion is associated with relevant mental health challenges. A meta-analysis reported a global prevalence of post-abortion depression of approximately 34.5%, although with substantial heterogeneity. In addition, a longitudinal population-based study found a persistent association between induced abortion and subsequent depression even after adjustment for confounding variables. Broader literature reviews also indicate that several studies identified higher rates of depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders after induced abortion when compared with childbirth or other pregnancy outcomes, although findings remain heterogeneous and influenced by contextual and methodological factors. Conclusion: Induced abortion is associated with significant mental health challenges, particularly depression, anxiety, and emotional distress. These findings raise serious concerns regarding its impact on women's well-being and reinforce the need for caution in clinical practice, considering its potential psychological consequences as well as its ethical implications related to the preservation of human life.

Palavras-chave: abortion; mental health; depression; anxiety; bioethics.