Dear Colleague:

Here are some items in the news concerning life, with facts that the news generally omitted—and one item largely omitted altogether.

Steven W. Mosher President

Life in the News

There have been a good number of items in the news about life recently—and one that should have been, but hasn’t. Just this week and as we foreshadowed two weeks ago, the FDA caved in to political pressure and created an unprecedented new procedure for handing out the morning-after pill (MAP) without a prescription. After the Constitutional Court of Colombia in May abrogated that nation’s democracy on the issue of abortion and legalized it in certain cases, the first legal Colombian abortion was performed. Scientists confused the public further on the issue of embryonic stem cells with more lies.

Perhaps the major media consider August the month for life news, because most ignored the news last month that premature births in America, rising steadily, are due partly to first-trimester abortions. No less a heavyweight, pro-abortion authority than the federal Institute of Medicine said so in a report released July 13. ‘In 2005, 12.5% of births in the United States were preterm, a 30% increase over 1981 rates,’ reported the institute.

The evidence of adverse health consequences for both post-abortive women and their born children continues to accumulate. ‘Women have the right to know that premature birth is associated with cerebral palsy for children and breast cancer for mothers, regardless of the prevailing ideology of the U.S. elite,’ said Karen Malec, President of the Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer. Malec noted that perhaps it’s not too surprising that journalists ignored the early abortion-premature birth connection, since it was on page 519 of the
report.

Yes, it is listed in Table 5 of Appendix B on page 519, not a very prominent place to acknowledge abortion’s risks’—especially since abortion is so common, with about 1.3 million performed every year. Anyway, in Table 5 of Appendix B, page 519, ‘prior first-trimester induced abortion’ is listed as one of the ‘immutable medical risk factors associated with preterm birth.’

Abortion’s connection to premature birth should not surprise anyone, both because of the commonsensical notion that a violent interruption of a natural reproductive process is likely to harm the reproductive system, and because ‘cervical and uterine anomalies’ are another risk factor for premature birth. The gouging of the uterine wall and subsequent growth of scar tissue that often take place during and after surgical abortion makes the womb that much the less hospitable for a woman’s next child.

It is also beyond reasonable doubt that the abortion of a woman’s first child makes her more susceptible to breast cancer. ‘Breast tissue is only matured from cancer-susceptible tissue into cancer resistant tissue during the last eight weeks of a full-term pregnancy,’ says the coalition. ‘During this time, women receive protection from estrogen overexposure experienced during the first two trimesters of pregnancy.’

The latest report from a major medical institution linking premature birth to abortion is probably something you haven’t read about before now. Here are some items you may have, but without the distortions presented by the major media:

- ‘FDA makes safe ‘emergency contraception’ conveniently available to adult women.’
  
  First of all, MAP is not contraception. All medical experts acknowledge that it often works after conception, to prevent the already-conceived child from implanting in his mother’s womb. Therefore, MAP is murder. Also, it is not safe for the woman using it. Though an FDA panel of experts concluded that rare use of MAP by a woman is safe, the same panel warned that repeated use could have severe health consequences. Now that college co-eds can get MAP at the corner drugstore, without having to talk to a doctor or pharmacist, who can doubt that the irresponsible ones won’t use it again and again after nights of drinking and debauchery? And if you think young women today don’t engage in a lot of drinking and debauchery, you haven’t been paying attention.

  Why add huge doses of steroids’—which is what MAP is—to their problems? Also, it’s an open question if the FDA has the authority to make MAP available over-the-counter but only to
adults, which has never been done before.

- ‘First legal abortion takes place in Colombia.’ ‘Legal’ only in the sense that the Constitutional Court of Colombia, in a lawsuit funded by American pro-abortion lobbies, discarded the will of the Colombian people and their elected representatives to legalize abortion in the cases of danger to the mother’s life, a deformed child, and rape. An 11-year-old girl raped by her stepfather was reportedly the first case. It’s a hard case, of course, but not even it justified the killing of that girl’s baby.
- ‘Stem cells can now be obtained from embryos without killing them, solving any ethical concerns about embryonic stem cell research.’ Not letting the grass grow under its feet, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops pounced on this one immediately. ‘Researchers did not safely remove single cells from early embryos, but destroyed 16 embryos in a desperate effort to obtain an average of six cells from each one,’ said Richard Doerflinger, Deputy Director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the USCCB. ‘This experiment left no embryos alive, and solves no ethical problem. From the resulting 91 cells, they still only managed to make two cell lines. Their study shows nothing about the safety of removing only one cell, which in fact is something they never did—partly because their own earlier experiment in mice indicated that ‘co-culturing’ several cells together might be needed to develop a cell line. Even if the authors had shown that single cells obtained by ‘embryo biopsy’ could produce a cell line, serious ethical problems would remain.

When this procedure is used to do genetic testing of embryos in fertility clinics, some embryos apparently do not survive the procedure, and the long-term risks for children later born alive are unknown.’

As normal life returns to the nation after Labor Day, and an Election Day that could put Congress firmly into the control of pro-death forces looms nearer, expect more distorted stories.

*Joseph A. D’Agostino is Vice President for Communications at the Population Research Institute.*