



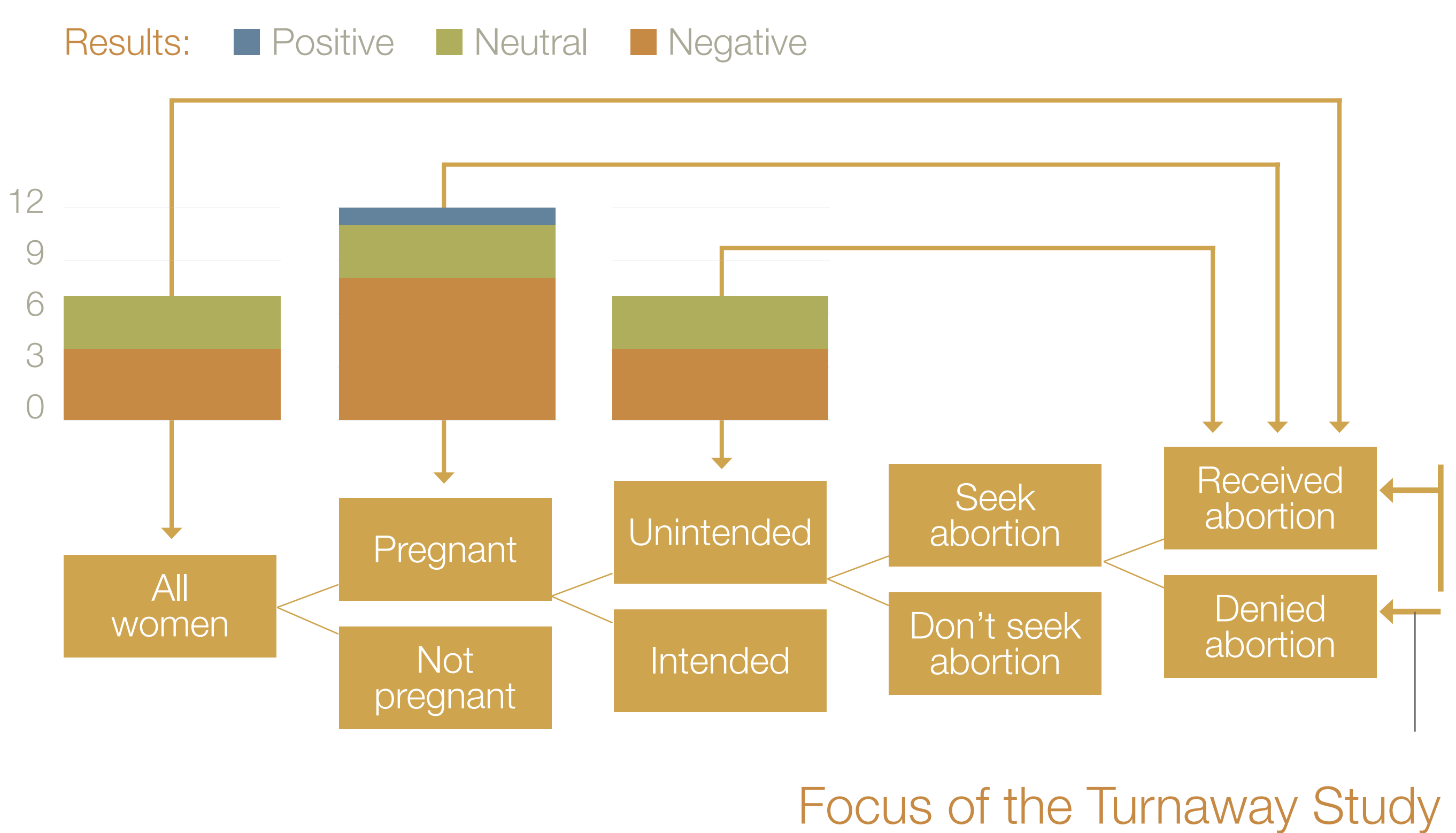
Women receiving and being denied abortion in the United States: A study of women’s wellbeing

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Background

There remains considerable controversy in the scientific literature about the physical and psychological sequelae of abortion, particularly second trimester abortion. Much of the existing work compares women who obtain abortions with those who continue their pregnancies to term by choice. Such a comparison is inherently biased and paints a distorted picture of life following an elective abortion or pregnancy continuation.

Number of U.S. studies since 1990 of mental health among women who received abortions
(By comparison group and direction of results)



Other problems with the literature on mental health and abortion:

- Inadequate control for co-occurring risks
- Sampling frame bias
- Differential exclusion of samples
- Retrospective under-reporting of abortion
- Un-validated outcome measures
- Statistical issues

To understand how abortion and unintended childbearing affects women’s lives, well-designed prospective research that uses appropriate comparison groups is needed.

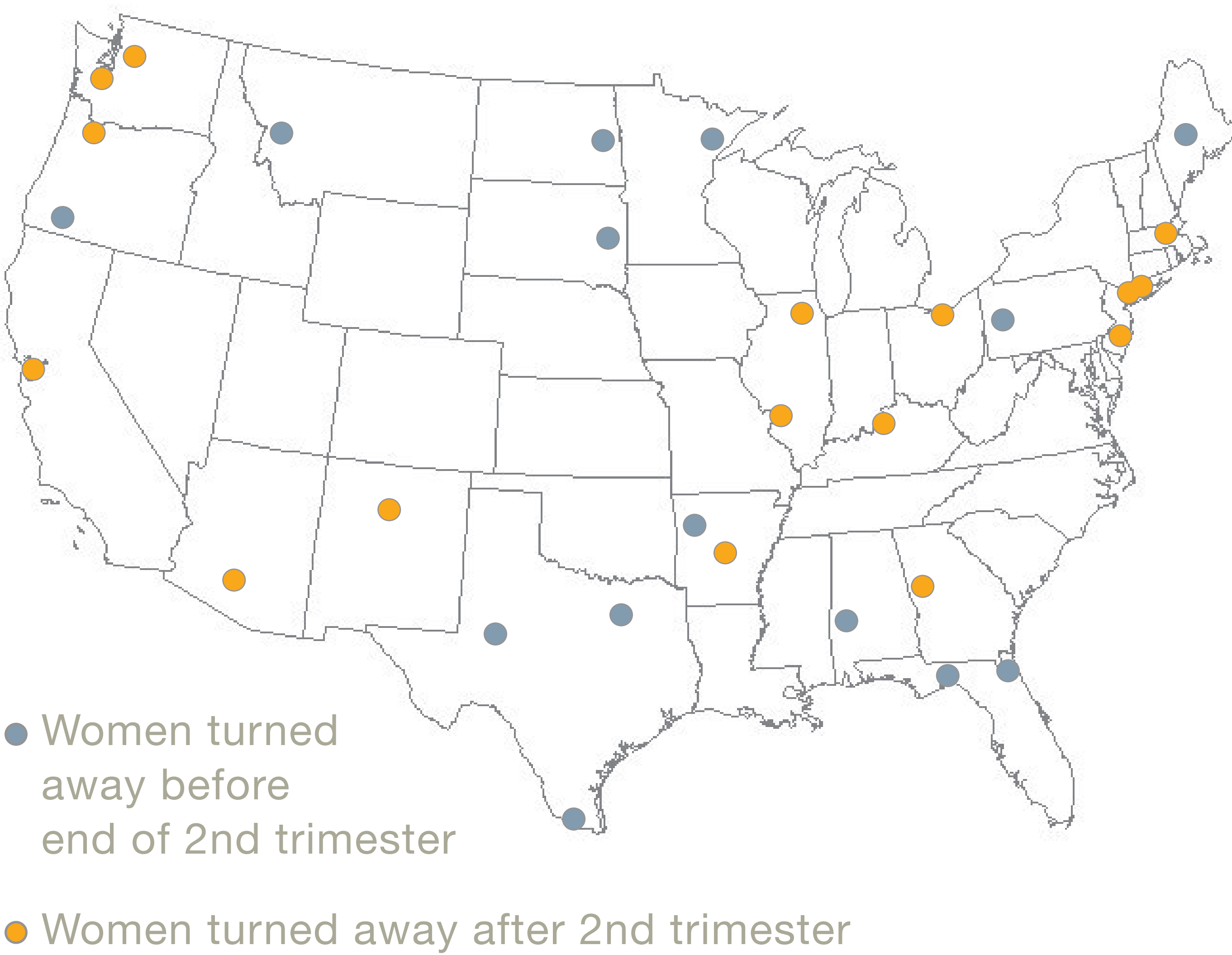
Methods

The Turnaway Study is currently recruiting from 30 abortion clinics across the country where no nearby abortion clinic serves women at a later gestation. Enrollment began in January 2008 and will close in December 2010. Eligible individuals include English- and Spanish-speaking abortion patients, 15 years old and older, who have no known maternal health indications for abortion and no known fetal anomalies. All women are followed using semi-annual phone interviews for five years.

We are recruiting three types of participants:

- **Turnaways (TA):** women who are up to 3 weeks over the gestational limit of the clinic and are denied an abortion
- **Abortion Control (AC):** women who are within 2 weeks under the clinic’s gestational limit and receive an abortion
- **First Trimester (FT):** women receiving abortions in the first trimester.

Turnaway Study clinic recruitment sites
(By gestational limit)



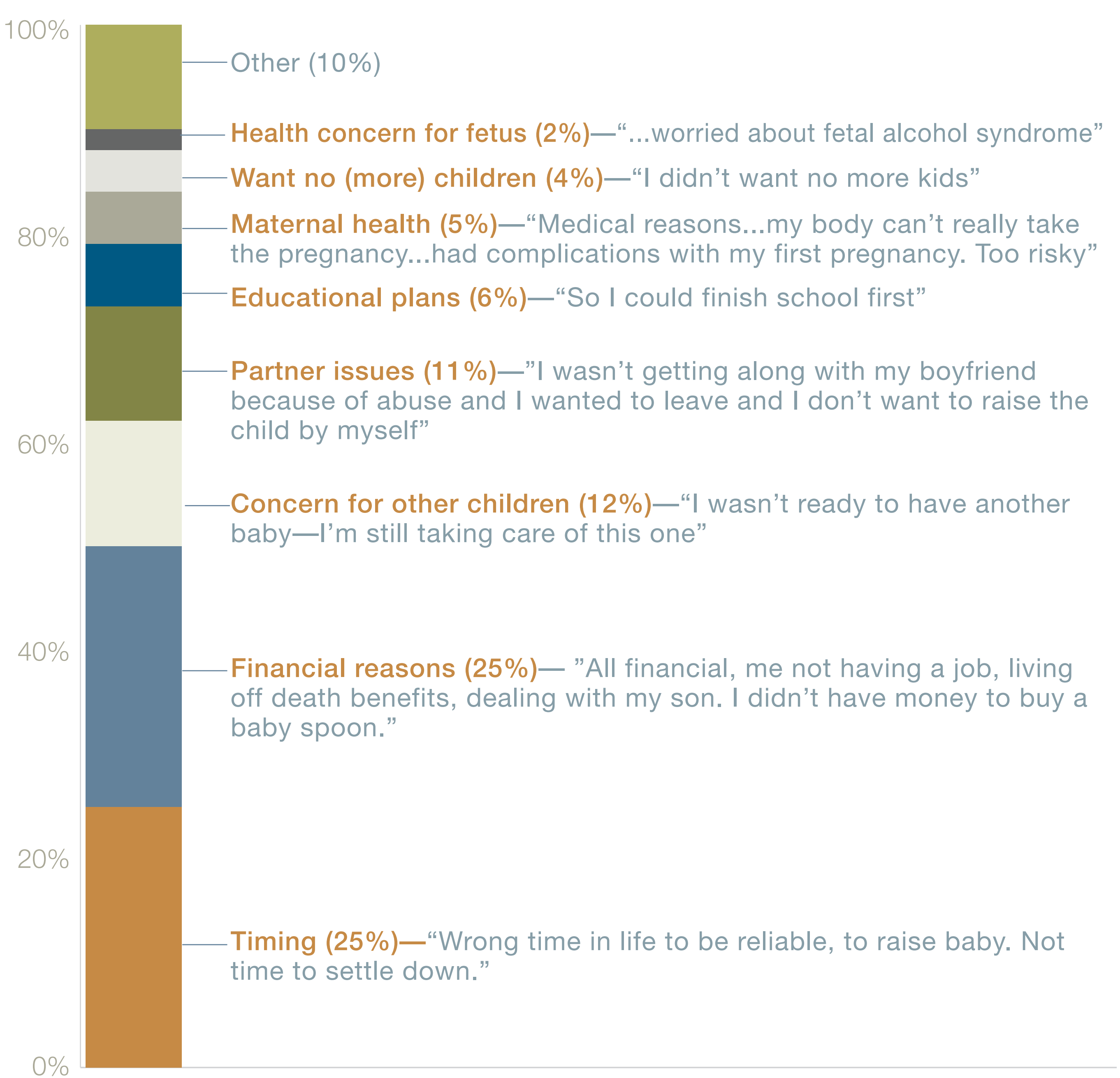
Study measures

- **Physical health:** Abortion complications, pregnancy/birth complications, general health, disability, obesity, domestic violence, health insurance coverage, health services access, specific conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, asthma, chronic pain)
- **Mental health:** Depression, anxiety, somatization, sleeping disorders, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, history and current mental health diagnoses and treatment, history of depression, substance abuse, history of stressful life events, PTSD, self esteem and life satisfaction
- **Reproductive history:** Reproductive intentions, contraceptive use, unintended pregnancies, birth outcomes, parity

Preliminary results

As of April 1, 2010 we had interviewed 682 women—173 Turnaways (TA), 319 Abortion Control (AC) patients and 190 First Trimester (FT) patients. TA’s have a gestational age between 10 and 28 weeks (mean 21). AC’s have a gestational age between 8 and 27 weeks (mean 18). FT’s have a gestational age between 3 and 14 weeks (mean 8).

Reasons for seeking an abortion (N=682)



- **Emotional responses & counseling:** Anger, happiness, sadness, guilt, regret, and relief, counseling expectations, usefulness of counseling, support for abortion & birth by family and friends, experience with crisis pregnancy centers
- **Socioeconomic outcomes:** Education, employment, income, welfare use, child support, residency, life plans, social support, religiosity, relationships, dependents
- **Abortion attitudes:** Reasons for seeking abortion, reasons for delay in seeking an abortion, effect of ultrasound on abortion decision, impact of anti-choice protestors, abortion access, attitudes about abortion
- **Child wellbeing:** Maternal bonding, care of children, cohabitation with children, Birth outcomes, child development, child health, disability, pre-school attendance

Reasons for delay (N=494)	First trimester	Abortion control	Turnaway	
Cost of the procedure	31%	60%	45%	*
Not knowing you were pregnant	32%	41%	46%	*
Trouble deciding whether or not you wanted an abortion	30%	43%	39%	*
Insurance coverage	20%	34%	28%	*
Not knowing where to go to get the abortion	18%	28%	26%	
Travel costs	13%	25%	24%	*
Figuring out how to get to the clinic	11%	23%	25%	*
The man you became pregnant with disagreeing with your decision to have an abortion	15%	18%	25%	

*Differences significant at 0.05 level

Depression

