Supplementary Analyses

The results of the analyses using the two alternative classifications of women’s pregnancy and abortion status prior to age 21 were generally consistent with the findings from the main analyses.

First, in all bivariate analyses, associations between the pregnancy and abortion classification and all outcomes were statistically significant (p<0.01). Women who had been pregnant and not had an abortion had consistently poorer outcomes (reduced educational achievement, lower income, higher welfare dependence, poorer partner relationships) than those who had had an abortion; women who had not been pregnant had better outcomes than either of the other groups.

Second, in all analyses, adjustment for confounding factors showed that most of the differences between women who had had an abortion and others who had become pregnant were explained by the covariates. However, even after adjustment, all analyses produced evidence of significant or marginally significant tendencies for women who had had an abortion to have better educational outcomes than those who had had a pregnancy but not an abortion. Analyses using both alternative classification approaches showed significantly higher levels of degree attainment among those having abortions (p<0.05). In addition, the analysis using the two dichotomous variables showed that compared with women who had had a pregnancy but not an abortion, those who had had an abortion were marginally more likely to have gained any tertiary qualification (p<0.10) and had a significantly higher rate of partner violence (p<0.05).

Third, in all analyses, after covariate adjustment, women who had had an abortion had a significantly higher rate of welfare dependence and a lower rate of full-time employment than those who had never been pregnant (p<0.01).

Finally, consistent with the findings in Table 3, in all analyses, the adjusted results showed that in comparison with those who had never been pregnant, those who had become pregnant but had not had an abortion had a significantly lower income (p<0.01), a higher rate of welfare dependence (p<0.01), less involvement in full-time employment (p<0.01), a lower level of degree attainment (p<0.05) and a lower level of tertiary qualification (p<0.05). In addition, the analyses based on the classification using the dichotomous variables suggested a significant tendency for pregnancy without abortion to be associated with a higher rate of exposure to partner violence (p<0.01).

**DISCUSSION**

Previous research has suggested that the major reasons that young women seek abortion is to reduce the perceived effects of an unwanted or mistimed pregnancy on life course plans. In this article, we have used data gathered in a 25-year longitudinal study to explore the extent to which abortion prior to the age of 21 mitigated the educational, economic and social disadvantages that have been associated with early pregnancy.