

Challenges in providing second trimester services: UK perspectives

Ann Furedi
British Pregnancy Advisory Service

Challenges

- The law
- Regulation
- Professional attitudes
- Public & political attitudes

The Law

- Legal on grounds relating to woman's health including mental health (social factors can be considered) or fetal abnormality
- Must be carried out by medical practitioner
- In hospital or specially licensed premises
- 2 doctors must certify that woman meets medical criteria (but don't have to have seen the woman)
- 24 week limit except gave damage to woman's health/life or fetal abnormality

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

- No legal right/entitlement for women
- Stigmatised
- Marginalised

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

- No legal right/entitlement for women
- Stigmatised
- Marginalised

Opportunities

- Liberal interpretation means easy access
- No additional restrictions on 2nd trimester procedures

Regulations

Healthcare Commission inspects against

- Core Standards
- Acute Standards
- Termination of Pregnancy Standards

Abortion not understood well by non-specialists

Professional attitudes: ignorance

- Abortion can be prevented by better use of contraception and improved sex education
- Late abortions can be prevented by easier access to early abortion
- Women's decisions are usually clear cut

Professionals attitudes: prejudice

- Low status - recruitment problems
- Training
- Reluctance to perform late gestation procedures
- Risk aversion/ insurance concerns

Public attitudes

- Abortion generally seen as a necessary evil
- Widespread support for choice in early pregnancy which diminishes as the gestation advances
- Lack of understanding about reasons why second trimester is necessary
- Concern about viability/fetal pain

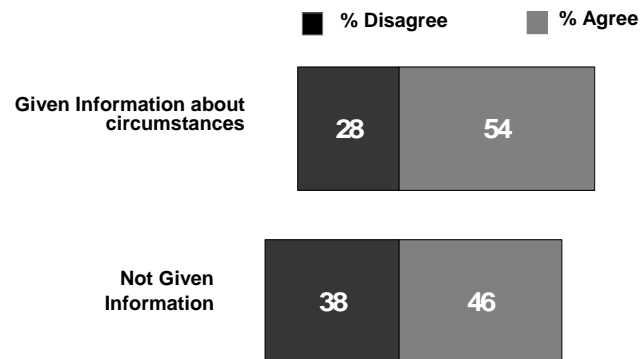
Public attitudes

- Abortion generally seen as a necessary evil
- Widespread support for choice in early pregnancy which diminishes as the gestation advances
- Lack of understanding about reasons why second trimester is necessary
- Concern about viability/fetal pain

Two strategies – accept and adapt
win hearts and minds

Information provision affects approval of abortion up to 24 weeks

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that abortion should continue to be allowed to take place up to 24 weeks?



Questions???

ann.furedi@bpas.org

www.bpas.org