

How providers treat women seeking a second trimester abortion

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Provision of 2nd trimester TOP according to CTOP Act 96

Section 2.1 b a pregnancy may be terminated from 13th week up to 20th week if :

- Pregnancy poses a risk of injury to woman physical or mental health
- Fetus would suffer from a severe physical or mental abnormality
- Pregnancy resulted from rape or incest
- Continued pregnancy would affect social & economic circumstances of the woman

Only doctors may perform the termination in the 2nd trimester

Problems

- 2nd trimesters have very limited capacity e.g. GP in 2004: 12000 requested, 4830 provided
- Doctors unwilling/unavailable
- No theatre/ward space available
- HCPs traumatized
- 2nd trimesters comprised **23.65%** of TOPs

2nd Trimester Service Provision

- Study in 2003 by Reproductive Health Research Unit on 2nd trimester TOP barriers
- Only 7/17 hospitals provided TOP
 - Resistance to providing services on basis for socioeconomic reasons
 - Reluctance to provide TOP above 16 weeks
 - Stigma surrounding TOP services
 - Poor staffing in gynaecology wards contributory
 - Conscientious Objection

This results in:

- Women send away
- Women taking misoprostol without guidance--> even taken in more advanced stages of pregnancy
- Still high number of incompletes admitted
- Women traveling over long distances
- Concentration of women at few facilities:
 - Overburdening of staff and facility
 - Quality of care ≤
- Difficulty in sustaining a pool of abortion providers in unsupportive/hostile environment

Examples how women are treated

South Africa

- Anti-choice sonographer in Oudtshoorn
- Complication and consequences in Worcester, a regional hospital

The Netherlands

- Attitude of German doctors
- Attitude of referral hospital in Maastricht

Conclusion:

- We must acknowledge that 2nd trimester TOP's form a huge problem
- However, we should expose doctors/ managers who are acting against the law
- Abortion provision should become part of the medical curriculum
- Misoprostol should be on the essential druglist
- Mifepristone should be cheaper and easily available in order to make medical abortion a more accepted procedure for providers and for women
- Educate women not to wait with a request for TOP