



FAST FACTS ON ABORTION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Around the world

- Worldwide, 48 percent of all induced abortions are unsafe. In developed regions, nearly all abortions (92 percent) are safe, whereas in developing countries, more than half (55 percent) are unsafe.
- Worldwide, an estimated 5 million women are hospitalized each year for treatment of abortion-related complications, such as hemorrhage and sepsis.
- Complications due to unsafe abortion procedures account for an estimated 13 percent of maternal deaths worldwide, or 67,000 per year.
- Most abortions occur in developing countries — 35 million annually, compared with 7 million in developed countries — a disparity that largely reflects the relative population distribution.
- Almost all abortion-related deaths occur in developing countries. They are highest in Africa, where there were an estimated 650 deaths per 100,000 unsafe abortions in 2003, compared with 10 per 100,000 in developed regions.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines unsafe abortion as a procedure for terminating an unintended pregnancy carried out either by persons lacking the necessary skills, or in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards, or both.
- More than 95 percent of abortions in Africa and Latin America are performed under unsafe circumstances, as are about 60 percent of abortions in Asia (excluding Eastern Asia).
- Additional consequences of unsafe abortion include loss of productivity, economic burden on public health systems, stigma and long-term health problems, such as infertility.
- Two-thirds of unsafe abortions occur among women 15- 30 years old.



- 14 percent (2.5 million) of all unsafe abortions in developing countries occur in women younger than 20.
- In Africa, 60 percent of unsafe abortions are among women 25 or younger.
- In Asia, 30 percent of unsafe abortions are among women 25 or younger.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 70 percent of all abortions are among women younger than 30.

References

Guttmacher Institute. 2007. In brief: Facts on induced abortion worldwide. Geneva, World Health Organization. Available online at http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/unsafe_abortion/induced_abortion_worldwide.pdf.

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