

Fact Sheet



Abortion Incidence and Severity of Related-Complications in Liberia

This fact sheet summarizes findings from a 2021 nationwide abortion study in Liberia, conducted between September 2021 and March 2022 by the Ministry of Health, the Clinton Health Access Initiative Liberia, the African Population and Health Research Center, and The Guttmacher Institute. The study aimed to estimate the incidence of induced abortion and the magnitude and severity of abortion-related complications in Liberia.

Incidence of induced abortion



38,779 induced abortions occurred in Liberia



Induced abortion rate of **30.7 / 1,000** women of reproductive age



Induced abortion ratio of **229 abortions/1,000** live births



14,555 women received care for abortion-related complications in facilities. Public facilities **67%**, Primary level facilities **74%**.



Induced abortion and unintended pregnancy rates.



Of all pregnancies in Liberia in 2021, **52%** were unintended, and of the unintended pregnancies, **35%** ended in abortion.



The national unintended pregnancy rate was **86.5** per 1000 WRA



The regions with the highest unintended pregnancy rates also had the highest proportion of pregnancies that ended in abortion; North Western - 118 per 1,000 WRA and South Central - 99.8 per WRA



Severity of abortion complications



About **26%** of women seeking post-abortion care had mild complications, moderately severe complications (**25%**), and severe complications (**37%**). Nationally, 11% were near-misses or resulted in death.



Regions with highest proportions of women with severe complications were North-Western (**51.8%**), North Central (**42.9%**), and South-Central regions (**40%**), whereas South-Eastern B (**17%**) and South Eastern A (**3%**) regions had the least proportion of women with severe complications.



Most common complications reported among post-abortion patients were infections and sepsis (**59%**), hemorrhage (**31%**) and systolic blood pressure less than 91 mmHg (**24%**), and temperatures higher than 37.3 °C (22.2%). There was one death during the study period.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Health should invest in improving access to family planning and contraceptives to reduce the unmet need for these services. There is also need to accelerate legal and policy reforms that prevent unsafe abortion and create an enabling environment for access to safe and legal abortion using evidence proven methods (e.g. using manual vacuum aspiration, misoprostol, or combipack) to reduce abortion-related morbidity and mortality.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded through a grant from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; Sida Contribution No. 12103 for APHRC.

Source

The information in this fact sheet can be found in: Abortion incidence and severity of complications in Liberia: *Key findings from the 2021 National Abortion Study* (Monrovia, Liberia: Ministry of Health, Liberia, African Population and Health Research Center, Clinton Health Access Initiative Liberia, and Guttmacher Institute 2022).