MINISTRY OF HEALTH

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Incidence of induced abortions and the severity of abortion-related complications in Kenya

FACT SHEET

Background and Methods

In Kenya, abortion is largely legally restricted. As a result, many women who face unintended pregnancies are unable to access safe abortion methods and procedures. This fact sheet summarizes findings from a 2023 national abortion study in Kenya that was conducted by the Ministry of Health - Kenya, the African Population and Health Research Center, and the Guttmacher Institute. The study aimed to estimate the incidence of induced abortions, the severity of post-abortion complications, assess health facility capacity to provide post abortion care (PAC), and assess the lived experiences of women who have had abortions. To generate these estimates, we conducted four separate surveys: a nationally representative Health Facility Survey (HFS), a Knowledgeable Informants Survey (KIS), a Respondent Driven Sampling survey (RDS) of women who have had an induced abortion, and a Prospective Morbidity Survey (PMS) of PAC patients and their providers.

Induced abortion and unintended pregnancy rates

In 2023, there were an estimated **2,850,346** pregnancies in Kenya

of which

- **1,435,988** were unintended
- **792,694** ended in induced abortions

This corresponds to:

Unintended pregnancy rate	Induced abortion incidence rate	Induced abortion ratio
103.8 per 1,000 (WRA[1])	**57.3 per 1,000** (WRA)	**48.1 per 100** live births

Severity of post-abortion complications

Among all women who received postabortion care

- **1.4%** Experienced severe maternal outcomes (SMO)(including 5 women who died and 8 who were in a coma)
- **16.4%** Experienced potentially life-threatening complications (PLTCs)
- **28.5%** were classified with moderate complications
- **53.7%** **Had mild complications (More than half)**

[1] *Women of reproductive age = women aged 15-49*

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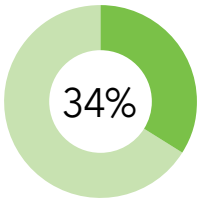
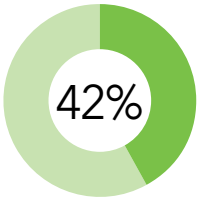
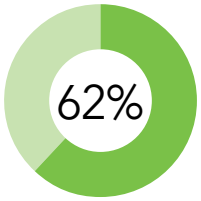
Experiences of women who have had abortions



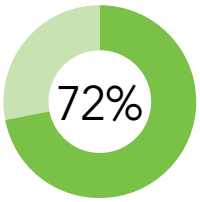
Only **1 in 3 women** (34%) were using a contraceptive method when they became pregnant.



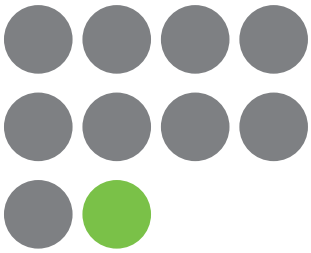
Feared using contraceptive method for **fear of side effects** or other health concerns.



Using medication abortion (MA) was the most common method women used to end their pregnancies



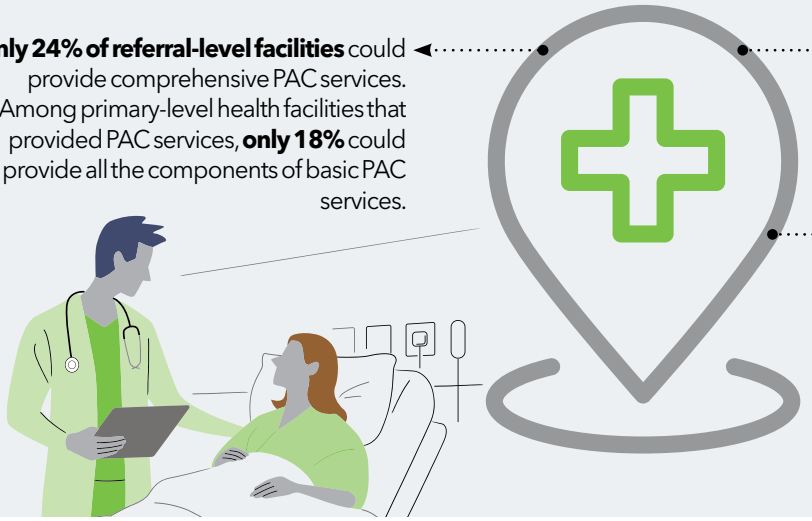
Of women used **at least 1** WHO-recommended method[2]



Almost one in ten women **(8%)** reported using a harmful, unsafe method. This represents a preventable risk to women who experience unintended pregnancies.

Capacity of health facilities to offer PAC

Only 24% of referral-level facilities could provide comprehensive PAC services. Among primary-level health facilities that provided PAC services, **only 18%** could provide all the components of basic PAC services.



Overall, **21% of health facilities** that were expected to provide PAC services did not provide them (primarily Level II and III facilities)

Providing **more than three types of short-acting contraceptive methods** was a key reason many facilities did not qualify as offering basic PAC. Notably, more primary facilities provided this than referral facilities (70% vs. 64%), and stock-outs were a major driver of this gap.

Key recommendations

1 Enhance the capacity of health facilities to provide quality PAC

i. Ensuring the provision of high-quality post-abortion care, including contraceptive counseling and services, will help reduce the incidence of recurrent pregnancies and repeat abortions.

ii. Primary facilities are the first point of care for women seeking services. Thus, it is critical to upgrade the capacity of primary-level facilities to provide all basic PAC services through staff training and the provision of PAC equipment and supplies.

2 Promote continued community sensitization efforts:

i. Improved community awareness of the availability of contraceptives and quality post-abortion care services can help ensure individuals know where to seek help.

Acknowledgments

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The information presented in this fact sheet can be found in:

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[2] *In this study, these were most commonly Medication Abortion (MA) or Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA)*