

Abortion problem in Serbia

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Trends Induced abortion has for a long time been a predominant method of birth control in Serbia. With spreading of contraception, its significance became to a decrease. Besides this positive trend, estimated number of abortions observed both absolutely (about 200.000 abortions per a year) and relatively (82.1 abortions per 1.000 women in the 15-49 age) shows that a significant number of women mostly, and a certain number of women exclusively, relies on this method of birth control. It should also be stressed that more or less all women, independently of the age, education, profession, marital status and other social, psychological and cultural characteristics, turn to induced abortion. This fact poses a number of questions, among which the most important one is why are women in Serbia not relying on modern contraception?

Deterministic basis Research findings discovered a complex array of factors of abortion problem, including insufficient knowledge of contraception and abortion, a belief that modern contraceptive methods are harmful to health, and a number of psychological barriers, also those arising from relationships with partners. Additionally, the liberalization of the abortion law occurred at a time of decrease birth rate and very modest presence of modern contraceptive methods. Also, there are few organized efforts to promote sex education, as well as limitations in the family planning programme. Thus, conclusion of one research is that gynecologists attitudes about modern contraceptive and behavior do not differ significantly from the rest of the people.

Consequences The incidence of early complications following induced abortion can be assessed as high. Every tenth abortion in Vojvodina, every fifth in Belgrade, i.e. almost every third in Central Serbia (excluding Belgrade) implies complications. Also, testing 21 variables have shown that the induced abortion and the number of such interventions are important determinants of infertility, miscarriage and premature delivery.

Actions in place Two actions in reproductive health sphere promotion have been carried out in Serbia from the end of 1990s. First action is related to network developing of reproductive health counseling centers for young people. Second action is activating schools for maintaining and promoting reproductive health for young people.

Conclusion Enabling young people to make right, responsible and healthy choices regarding sexual life is very important. But, the problem of induced abortion in Serbia is complex, serious and ask for many solution. It supposes the promotion of knowledge, the network of family planning services, the access to all kinds of modern contraceptive methods, widening the categories of health care workers who are involved in offering a contraceptive advice, increasing public information and advertising of contraceptives, stressing out the importance of post abortion counseling, involvement of males in taking over responsibility for birth control, enabling young people to make right, responsible and healthy choices regarding sexual life. Also, very important is to establish a legal basis for voluntary sterilization, as accessibility to this birth control method clearly correlates with the reduction of repeat abortions.