Preferred terminology amongst women seeking abortion in Britain

Cameron S, Lohr P, Ingham R
SACP & BPAS
Abortion vs Termination of pregnancy

• Abortion: International Classification Diseases
• WHO Guidelines, Abortion Act UK, RCOG
• Medical journal ‘termination of pregnancy’
• Scotland 2015 ‘termination statistics’

• Women’s views: terminology distressing
  ?what their preferred term would be?
Methods

• Self administered anonymous survey
• Scotland, England & Wales
• Scottish Abortion Care Providers, BPAS
• Terms ‘abortion’ or ‘termination of pregnancy ‘ distressing ?
• Preferred term ?

• Ethical approval not required
• Survey dates April- Sept 2015
Results

- 3013 questionnaires distributed (54 clinics)
- 2259 completed (75%)
- England (1342), Scotland (775), Wales (142)

- Mean age 27 yrs (range 13 to 51)
- 84% white
- 51% had children
- 36% had prior abortion
Do you find ABORTION or TERMINATION of PREGNANCY distressing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABORTION 2258 (%)</th>
<th>Termination of Pregnancy N = 2255 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>783 (35)*</td>
<td>399 (18)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>999 (44)</td>
<td>1418 (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>476 (21)</td>
<td>438 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.001

No association with demographics, reproductive history or country
Which would you prefer used? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N = 2240 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>263 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination of Pregnancy</td>
<td>1009 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either abortion or Termination of Pregnancy</td>
<td>347 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary interruption of pregnancy</td>
<td>203 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any of above</td>
<td>389 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No association with demographics, reproductive history or country.
Conclusion

- **Majority** do not find either ‘abortion’ or ‘termination of pregnancy’ distressing
- Majority who *express a preference* prefer ‘termination of pregnancy’
- Qualitative research needed
- Only study of women’s views
- Antagonistic discourse in media
- Abortion stigma: is the term stigmatised?
- Consider identifying women’s preference & modify language accordingly