

# THE IMPACT OF MISOPROSTOL AVAILABILITY ON ABORTION SAFETY

Anibal Faúndes

7th FIAPAC Congress

“Freedom and Rights in Reproductive Health”

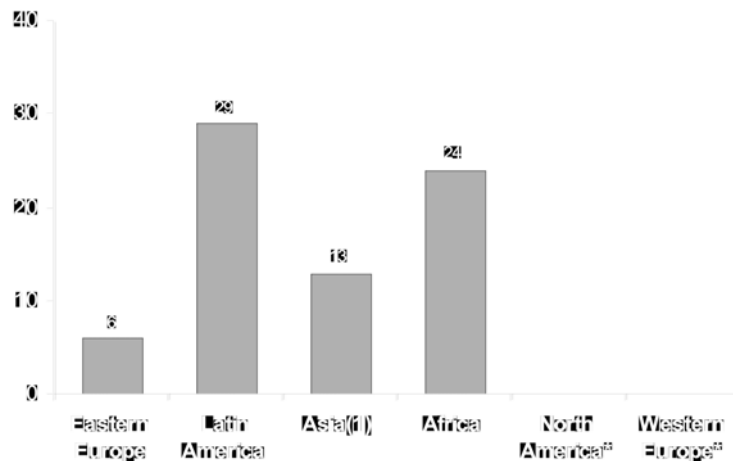
Rome, October 12-13, 2006

---

**In developing countries with  
restricted abortion laws,  
poor women have a very  
high rate of unsafe  
abortions.**

---

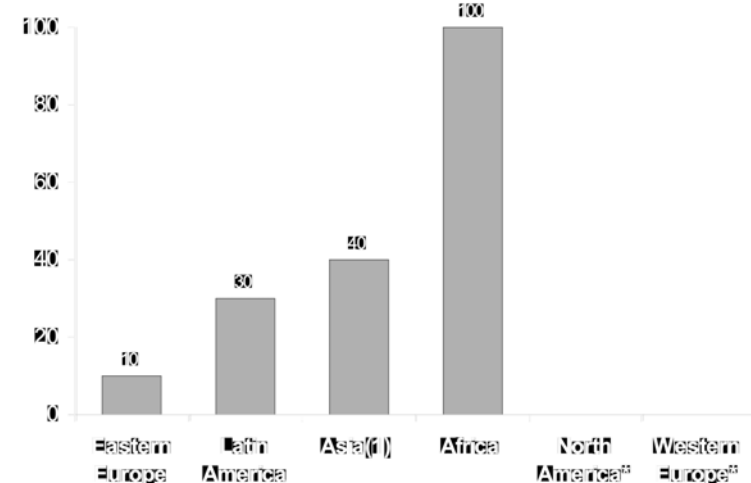
## UNSAFE ABORTION RATE PER 1000 WOMEN 15- 44 YEARS OLD, BY REGION



(1) Excluding Japan, Australia and New Zealand. (\*) Negligible

Source: World Health Organization. Unsafe Abortion: Global and Regional Estimates of Incidence of Unsafe Abortion and Associated Mortality in 2000, 4th ed. Geneva, 2004.

## MORTALITY DUE TO UNSAFE ABORTION PER 100.000 LIVEBIRTHS, BY REGION



(1) Excluding Japan, Australia and New Zealand. (\*) Negligible

Source: World Health Organization. Unsafe Abortion: Global and Regional Estimates of Incidence of Unsafe Abortion and Associated Mortality in 2000, 4th ed. Geneva, 2004.

---

**Misoprostol became available in the 1980s.**

**The label explained that it could not be used during pregnancy, as it could cause abortion.**

---

---

**This information was used by pharmacy's clerk to attend the demand of women requesting a remedy for delayed menses.**

---

---

**- In a few years, late 1980's, early 1990's, most abortion in Brazil were induced with misoprostol**

---

---

**- In a few years, late 1980's, early 1990's, most abortion in Brazil were induced with misoprostol**

**- Initially women used excessive dosage. Some severe complications and deaths (rupture uterus) were reported**

---

- 
- In a few years, late 1980's, early 1990's, most abortion in Brazil were induced with misoprostol
  - Initially women used excessive dosage. Some severe complications and death (rupture uterus) were reported
  - In a short time women learnt to use misoprostol more effectively and safely
- 

---

**Physicians throughout Latin America noticed a reduction in severe post-abortion complications.**

---

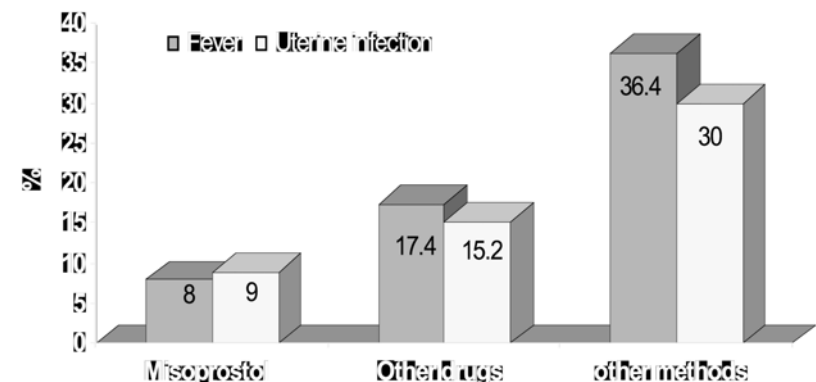
---

**During the last decade several studies have confirmed that:**

**1) Abortions induced with misoprostol are safer than those induced with other unsafe procedures**

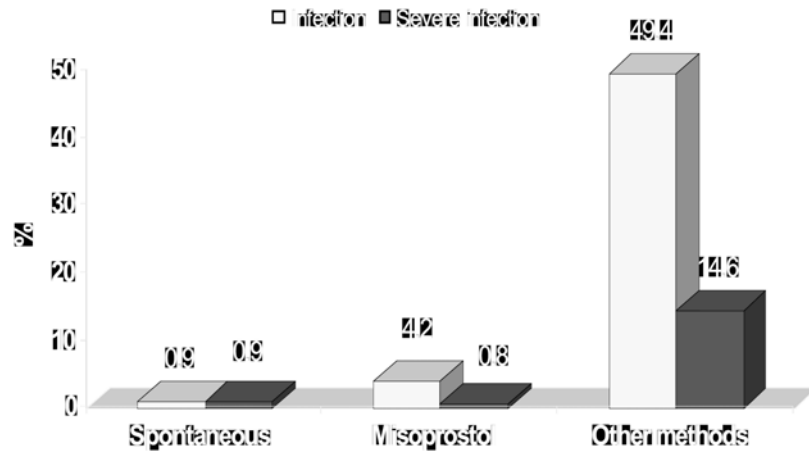
---

**Incidence of infection of induced abortions according to method of induction  
Goiânia, Brasil. 1994.**



Source: Viggiano et al, 1996.

## Percentage of abortion complicated with infection, according to method of induction Recife, Brazil

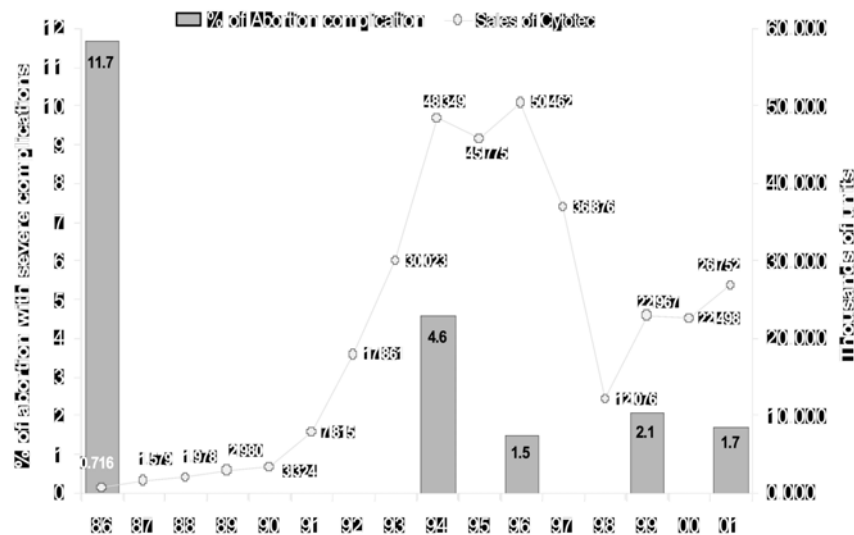


Source: Faúndes et al., 1996.

During the last decade several studies have confirm that:

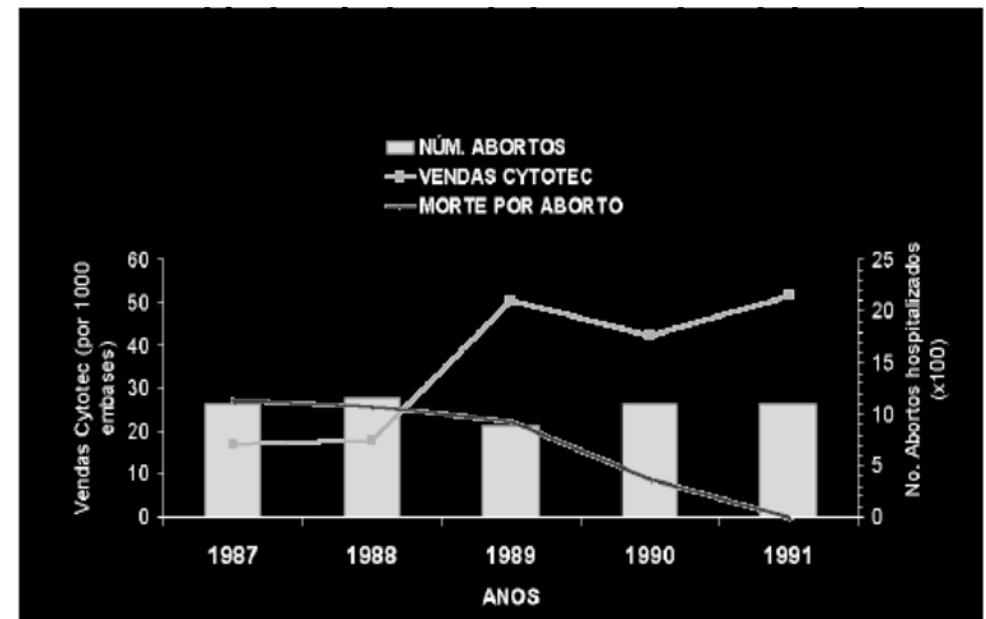
- 1) Abortions induced with misoprostol are safer than those induced with other unsafe procedures
- 2) There is a temporary association between increase in the sales of Misoprostol and reduction in the complications of unsafe abortion

## NATIONAL SALES OF CYTOTEC AND PERCENTAGE OF ABORTIONS WITH SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS IN LARGE HOSPITAL IN SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Source: Miller et al., IJGO, 2005;112:1291

## Sales of Cytotec, number of abortion complications



Fonte: Viggiano e cols., 1996.

- **The knowledge on the safe use of misoprostol by the women themselves was applied in a public health program in Uruguay, where abortion is the first cause of maternal mortality**

**Induced abortion is a crime in Uruguay. But as a medical and social process it has a period “before” and “after”.**

## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **1- Counseling on alternatives:**

**Continuation of pregnancy antenatal care and keep the baby**

## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **1- Counseling on alternatives:**

**Continuation of pregnancy antenatal care and keep the baby**

**Give the baby for adoption**

## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **1- Counseling on alternatives:**

**Continuation of pregnancy ante-natal care and keep the baby**  
**Give the baby for adoption**  
**Safe abortion within the law**

## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **1- Counseling on alternatives:**

**Continuation of pregnancy ante-natal care and keep the baby**  
**Give the baby for adoption**  
**Safe abortion within the law**  
**A still clandestine but low risk abortion**

## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **2- Information based on evidences**

**On methods used to induce abortion and their risk**

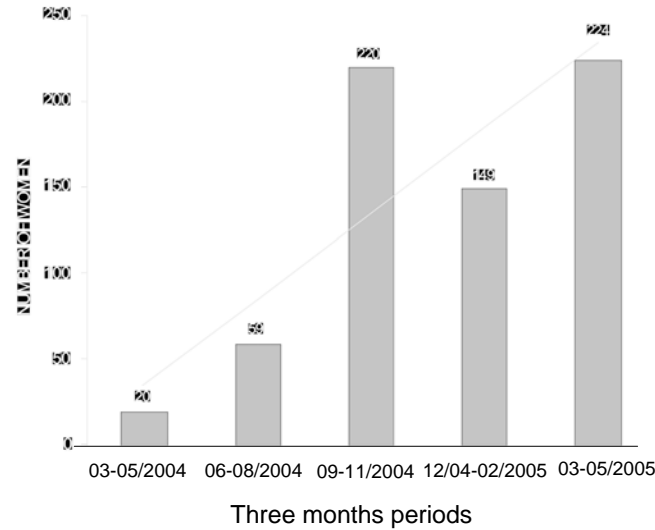
## **Visit “before” abortion**

---

### **2- Information based on evidences**

**On methods used to induce abortion and their risk**  
**Women’s empowered to take less risky decisions**

## Number of “before” abortion visits along time



465 out of 675 women (69%) were followed or returned for the “after” visit.

## Outcome of the pregnancies

---

➤ 9 (1.9 %) were not pregnant

## Outcome of the pregnancies

---

➤ 9 (1.9 %) were not pregnant

➤ 4 (0.9 %) complied with legal conditions.

## **Outcome of the pregnancies**

---

- **9 (1.9 %) were not pregnant**
- **4 (0.9 %) complied with legal conditions**
- **23 (4.9 %) abnormal pregnancy**

## **Outcome of the pregnancies**

---

- **9 (1.9 %) were not pregnant**
- **4 (0.9 %) complied with legal conditions**
- **23 (4.9 %) abnormal pregnancy**
- **16 (3.4 %) decided to go to term**

## **Outcome of the pregnancies**

---

- **9 (1.9 %) were not pregnant**
- **4 (0.9 %) complied with legal conditions**
- **23 (4.9 %) abnormal pregnancy**
- **16 (3.4 %) decided to go to term**
- **412 (88.6 %) clandestine abortion**

**Of the 412 women  
who decided to abort**

**100% used**

**Misoprostol**



## **COMPLICATIONS**

---

- **Bleeding greater than 500 ml requiring uterotonics and surgical evacuation:  
2 women (0.4 %).**

## **COMPLICATIONS**

---

- **Bleeding greater than 500 ml requiring uterotonics and surgical evacuation:  
2 women (0,4 %).**
- **Endometritis requiring antibiotics:  
1 women (0.2 %).**

**Conclusion**

---

**Misoprostol  
is  
a life saving  
drug**