Reactions and reflections in men involved in induced abortion

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Men involved in abortion constitute an invisible group.
Aim

To increase knowledge and understanding of the abortion situation by focusing on men’s views and experiences
Qualitative & Quantitative methods

One questionnaire (n=75)

Three follow-up interviews (n=27)
Results

Mean & median age 29 years (range 18-50 years)

A quarter had previously experienced an abortion

Stable relationships with a financially good position
Results

Two thirds clearly stated that they wanted an abortion (64%)

A quarter did not take any specific standpoint but left it to the woman to decide (27%)

Two wanted the woman to complete the pregnancy
Motives for abortion

- had all the children they wanted
- not the right time becoming a parent
- gave priority to other things
- unable to offer a child a caring environment
- insecure relationship with the woman
- socio-economic motives
- age
- no time for an extra child
- health
Negative feelings → → Painful feelings
Initial feelings related to the pregnancy (n=74 men)

- Unrealistic
- Wonder
- Joy
- Guilt
- Pride
- Despair
- Happiness
- Panic
- Dread
- Grief
- Shame
- Anger
- Deceit
- Indifference
- Disgust

%
Initial feelings related to the pregnancy

• Almost half used both positive and painful words

• A third chose words which only characterized pain

• A quarter chose only positively charged words
Feelings related to the expected abortion (n=75 men)

- Anxiety
- Responsibility
- Guilt
- Relief
- Grief
- Respect
- Release
- Anguish
- Powerlessness
- Injustice
- Emptiness
- Doubt
- Exclusion
- Anger
- Self-respect
- Shame
- Impatience
- Violation
- Crisis

%
Initial feelings related to the expected abortion

- More than half used both positive and painful words (57%)

- Less than a third chose words which only characterized pain (29%)

- Few chose only positively charged words (13%)
Contradictory feelings towards the pregnancy appeared among almost half of the men. Contradictory feelings towards the expected abortion appeared among more than half of the men.
Feelings related to the pregnancy in relation to feelings related to the abortion \((n = 74)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings related to the pregnancy</th>
<th>Feelings related to the abortion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only positive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both positive and painful</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only painful</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
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Strongly positive feelings can be experienced about the pregnancy - even if one is mentally prepared for abortion.
33 years, married, three children, both wanted an abortion

“The decision to have an abortion was right. . .
I have experienced that it is possible to take difficult decisions and survive. It is possible to heal and mourn . . .
the crisis has strengthened me.”
22 years, not cohabitant, no children, positive about a child but the woman wanted an abortion

“Abortion was probably the best solution. . . I have faced the seriousness of life, the first adversity. . . learnt something.”
23 years, not cohabitant, no children, both wanted an abortion

“I am a little sad when I think of it, but I do not mourn . . . still I feel it was the right decision. Everything that is difficult and becomes a trial that you manage makes you mature. My partner and I have been more closely united.”
37 years, married, three children, he wanted an abortion but the woman did not

“... nothing I regret. We did the right thing. We are doing well together ... do not know if the relationship would have survived a fulfilled pregnancy.”
Most men had experienced mental growth, maturity and a deepened self-knowledge as a sequel to the abortion.
Invisible men $\rightarrow$ visible!
A gender perspective is of fundamental importance.
• Feelings related to the coming abortion
  • Anxiety
  • Responsibility
  • Guilt
  • Relief
  • Grief
  • Respect
  • Release
  • Anguish
  • Powerlessness
  • Injustice
  • Emptiness
  • Doubt
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• Initial feelings related to the pregnancy
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