

Fertility control into the hands of women

14th FIAPAC CONFERENCE

9-10 September 2022, Riga, Latvia

www.fiapac.org



14th FIAPAC Conference

Managing Conscientious Objection

The Italian Conundrum

FIAPAC

International Federation of Professional
Abortion and Contraception Associates

Mirella Parachini (Italy)

Amica
Associazione Medici Italiani Contraccezione e Aborto

what are other
words for
conundrum?



enigma, riddle, puzzle, mystery,
brain-teaser, poser, problem,
secret, closed book, question



Abortion in Italy is regulated by Law 194



The law adopted in 1978 was viewed as one of the most liberal abortion laws in Western Europe



Italy's futile abortion laws

Despite legislation, far-right politicians and religious organisations have entrenched ways to deny women their right to an abortion and shame those who do terminate a pregnancy.

By: Alex Čizmić

5 May 2021

There are laws that are enacted to bring about real-life change. There are others that are pushed through simply to give the illusion of progress. The latter seems to be the case in Italy with Law 194/78.

is it true ?

Italy's women are finding it harder to get abortions as number of pro-choice doctors fall

BMJ 2016 ; 353 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i2184> (Published 15 April 2016)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2016;353:i2184

Italy is failing to ensure that abortion is routinely available and is allowing discrimination to take place as the number of pro-choice doctors and nurses shrinks, the Council of Europe has said.

The Strasbourg based intergovernmental human rights watchdog said that women in Italy continued to have "significant difficulty" in accessing pregnancy termination services, even though abortion was legal, and that as a result Italy was violating women's health rights.



EUROBULL

***ITALY: WHERE LEGAL ABORTION DOES NOT
NECESSARILY MEAN ACCESSIBLE
ABORTION***

9 March 2021, by Maëva Pusiol



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EUROPE



The complicated state of abortion access in Italy

June 9, 2022 4:58 AM ET

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

ADAM RANEY

Abortion in Italy is legal, but finding one is hard



Issued on: 14/06/2022 07:40



2 main factors



lack of hospital facilities

high proportion of gynaecologists that are conscientious objectors



an abortion may **only** be carried out in a public hospital
or authorized private facility

there are no abortion clinics in Italy

Abortion in Italy: how widespread 'conscientious objection' threatens women's health and rights

Almost 40 years after abortion was legalised – amid mass protests and a broader cultural liberation movement – women still struggle to access crucial services [Leggi questo articolo in italiano.](#)



[Claudia Torrisi](#)

15 June 2017

openDemocracy
free thinking for the world



la Repubblica

JUNE 2016



L'unico medico non obiettore va in pensione: stop agli aborti all'ospedale di Trapani

*the only non-objector doctor retires :
stop abortions at the hospital of Trapani*

la Repubblica

“Da 40 anni pratico gli aborti e per continuare a garantire la 194 in Molise ho rinviato la pensione”



▲ Michele Mariano, ginecologo non obiettore

The Telegraph

Italian pro-abortion doctor postpones retirement as search continues for his replacement

July 2021

JANUARY
2022

**Ciriè, l'ospedale dove non si
può abortire: tutti i
ginecologi sono obiettori**

*Ciriè, the hospital where abortions cannot be
performed: all gynaecologists are objectors*

Cosenza, si dimette l'ultimo ginecologo non obietto di coscienza: "In città abortire non è più un diritto"

Cosenza, the only non-objector gynaecologist leaves hospital : 'in this city abortion is not a right'

« that in a hub hospital for some time there was only one non-objector doctor (what if he had been absent for unforeseeable reasons?) is incredible »

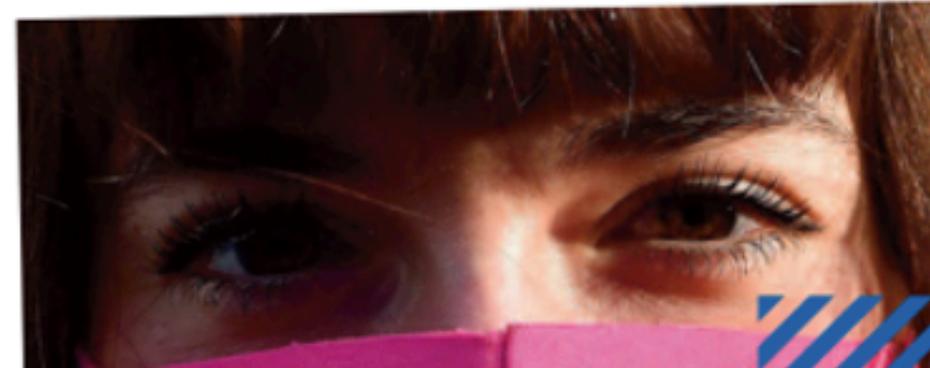
lunedì 8 agosto 2022

www.lecronache.info

Legge 194: tra interruzione volontaria di gravidanza, obiezioni di coscienza e tutela dei diritti delle donne in regione l'81,4% del personale esercita il diritto ad opporsi

Aborto, in Basilicata 2 ginecologi su 3 sono obiettori di coscienza

Nella Relazione di attuazione del Ministero della salute vengono riportati i dati aggregati su scala nazionale e regionale. Dati statici non navigabili e non sufficientemente



2 out of 3 gynecologists in Basilicata are conscientious objectors

Diritto di aborto, medici all'osso e le donne in desolante difficoltà

Al Policlinico un solo professionista disponibile per il servizio
All'ospedale Papardo i ginecologi tutti obiettori di coscienza

*Abortion rights, doctors on the bone
and women in discouraging distress*

*At the Policlinico only one provider available for this service
At Papardo hospital, gynecologists all conscientious objectors*

Il diritto all'aborto

Sembra il Medioevo, in Campania i ginecologi non obiettori discriminati e costretti a lavorare di più

→ La libertà di scelta delle donne dipende dall'obiezione di coscienza, attuata in Campania dal 74% dei medici

It seems like the Middle Ages, in Campania, gynecologists non-objectors discriminated against and forced to work harder

Women's freedom of choice depends on conscientious objection, made in Campania by 74% of doctors

Aborto, donna si rivolge a 23 ospedali per potere interrompere la gravidanza



Abortion, woman turns to 23 hospitals to be able to terminate pregnancy

APRIL 23, 2017

Aborto, denunciò di aver ricevuto 23 rifiuti in Veneto. Ma l'inchiesta accerta che le cose non andarono così



*Abortion, reported receiving 23 rejections in Veneto
But investigation finds that this was not the case*

ABORTION IN ITALY A POLITICAL ISSUE



Give this article



By Alvin Shuster Special to The New York Times

Nov. 30, 1975

Influencer Chiara Ferragni puts abortion rights at the centre of Italian election

Tom Kington, Rome

Friday August 26 2022, 12:01am BST,
The Times



She said Fratelli d'Italia had made it "practically impossible to get an abortion" in the east-central Marche region which it governs, and from where Meloni launched her campaign for the September 25 general election Tuesday night.

"This is a policy which risks becoming national if the right wins the elections"

Abortion rights at risk in region led by party of Italy's possible next PM

The Brothers of Italy has further impeded access to abortion in the Marche region - a policy it could replicate nationally if it wins power

Mon 22 Aug 2022

LAW AND SOCIAL
THEORY

BEYOND CONTROL

Medical Power and
Abortion Law



SALLY SHELDON



London : Pluto, 1997

Abortion is now recognised as primarily a medical issue, rather than one of political and social importance; its regulation determined by the authority of doctors and other medical professionals.

- **what exactly does the law say**
- **the official data**
- **proposals**





- what the law exactly says
 - the official data

ART. 9



Health personnel and auxiliary staff shall not be required to
assist in pregnancy terminations if they have
a conscientious objection
declared in advance



Conscientious objection shall exempt healthcare and auxiliary staff
from carrying out procedures and activities

specifically and necessarily designed to bring about the termination of pregnancy

**and shall not exempt them from providing care
prior to and following the intervention**



Tabella 28 - Obiezione per categoria professionale nel servizio in cui si effettua l'IVG, 2020

ANESTESISTI	
N	%
3049	44,6

ART. 9

Conscientious objection may not be invoked by health personnel or auxiliary staff if, under the particular circumstances, their personal intervention is essential in order **to save the life of a woman in imminent danger**

Italy abortion row as woman dies after hospital miscarriage

🕒 20 October 2016

Valentina Milluzzo was admitted to Cannizzaro hospital in the Sicilian city of Catania on 29 September after suffering complications and going into premature labour in her 19th week of twin pregnancy. She had had fertility treatment at another health centre.

the family's lawyer alleges that the gynaecologist refused to abort the foetuses in order to save the mother and said:

"As long as it's alive, I will not intervene."

29 marzo 2018

The preliminary investigation into the death of Valentina Milluzzo has concluded

The role as conscientious objectors of the seven doctors
under investigation, does not enter the investigation

ITALY – Seven doctors on trial for manslaughter in the death in Sicily of Valentina Miluzzo in 2016

NEWS | ITALY | NOVEMBER 19, 2019

The prosecutor has argued that there was “professional negligence” including “imprudence, negligence and inexperience” and in particular :

- the failure to implement adequate antibiotic therapy
- the failed recognition of sepsis in progress
- the failure to collect samples for microbiological tests
- the failure to promptly remove the source of infection: the fetuses and placenta
- lack of administration of red blood cells during surgery

Quell'aborto negato a Valentina Milluzzo, il padre: "Ora cercano di falsificare carte, è un calvario"

Il processo per la morte di Valentina Milluzzo si sta svolgendo in primo grado a Catania e vede imputati sette medici dell'ospedale Cannizzaro

17-12-2020 19:58

That abortion denied Valentina Milluzzo, her father: "Now they try to forge papers, it's an ordeal"

Milluzzo family's medical examiner, heard in court today:

they intervened late, and that it was all done superficially and lightly

✓ what the law exactly says

➤ the official data



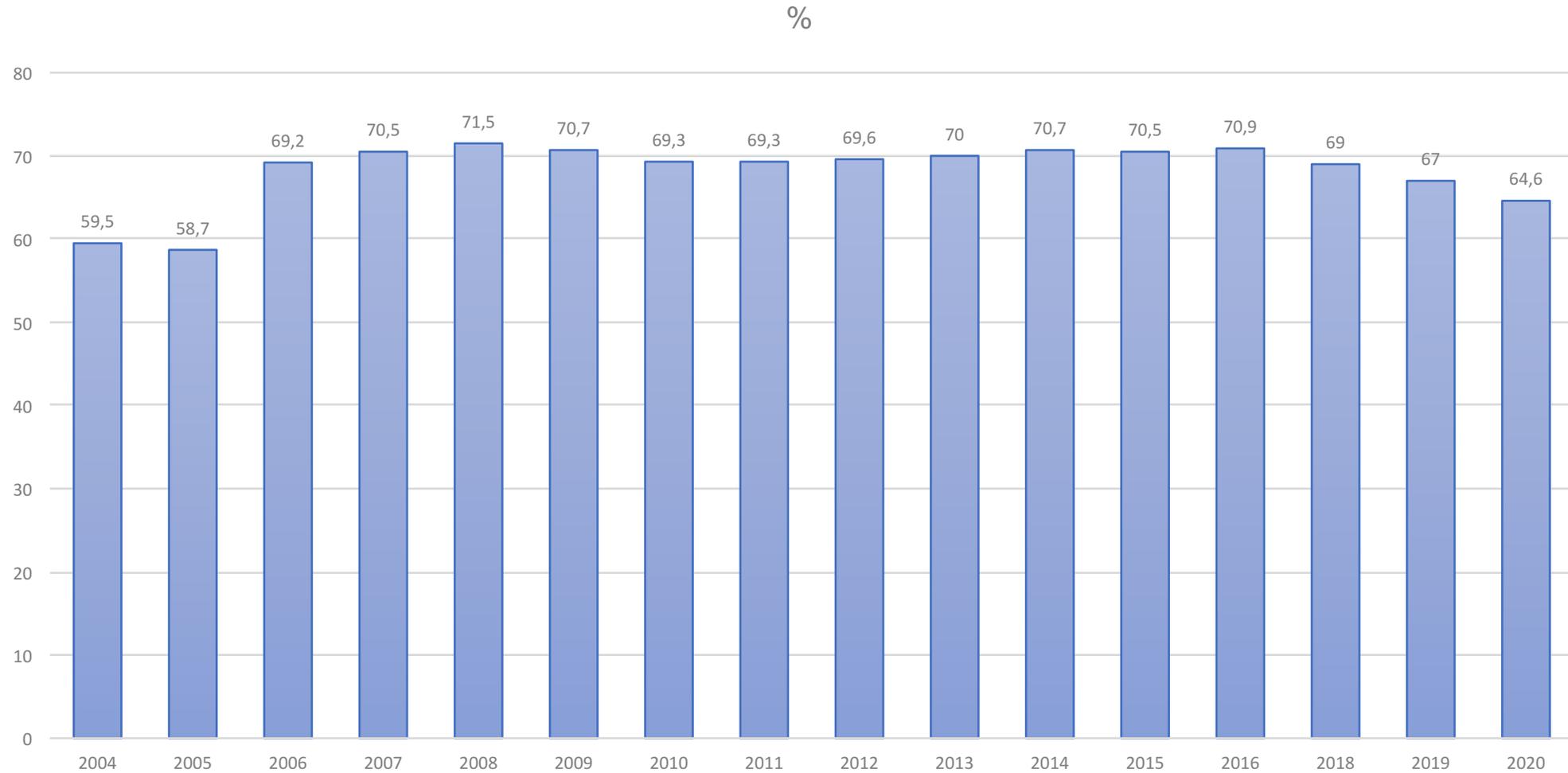


Italy is one of the countries where conscientious objection is best documented, as the legal obligation for conscientious objectors to declare their stance formally allows the Ministry of Health to disseminate accurate data on this phenomenon.

The lack of official data for other countries prevents comprehensive international comparisons

CO among Gynaecologists

Public Health Ministry data 2004-2020





Ministero della Salute

RELAZIONE DEL MINISTRO DELLA SALUTE
SULLA ATTUAZIONE DELLA LEGGE CONTENENTE
NORME PER LA TUTELA SOCIALE DELLA MATERNITÀ
E PER L'INTERRUZIONE VOLONTARIA DI GRAVIDANZA
(LEGGE 194/78)

DATI DEFINITIVI 2020

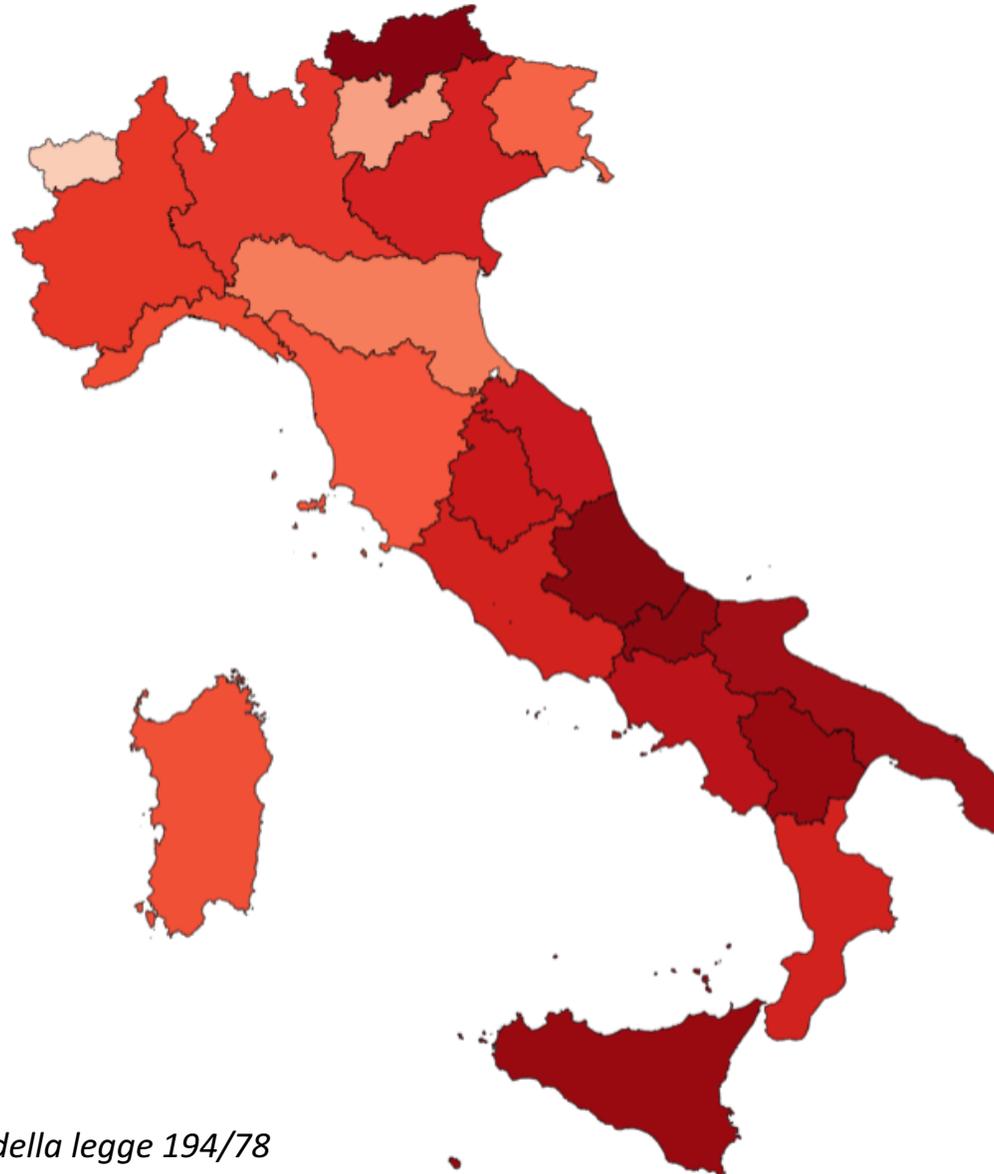
Tabella 28 - Obiezione per categoria professionale nel servizio in cui si effettua l'IVG, 2020

REGIONE	GINECOLOGI		ANESTESISTI		PERS. NON MEDICO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
ITALIA SETTENTRIONALE	1292	58,2	1319	36,0	3318	30,5
Piemonte	214	61,3	169	29,4	297	18,4
Valle d'Aosta	3	25,0	2	20,0	4	13,3
Lombardia	451	60,7	546	44,5	1406	43,2
Bolzano	60	84,5	63	62,4	389	73,5
Trento	14	35,9	26	27,1	290	14,7
Veneto	241	66,6	240	37,3	474	38,6
Friuli Venezia Giulia	59	50,9	33	21,4	127	24,4
Liguria	63	56,8	60	28,2	88	19,8
Emilia Romagna	187	45,0	180	28,1	243	18,8
ITALIA CENTRALE	584	63,3	661	44,3	1571	24,5
Toscana	189	54,5	151	29,2	305	18,8
Umbria	57	70,4	111	55,2	146	54,5
Marche	91	70,0	89	42,6	689	22,5
Lazio	247	67,7	310	54,8	431	29,2
ITALIA MERIDIONALE	675	76,9	648	61,4	1946	70,6
Abruzzo	109	83,8	164	71,3	377	69,3
Molise	24	82,8	17	60,7	99	90,0
Campania	202	73,5	91	50,6	320	73,4
Puglia	234	79,1	265	56,6	909	71,6
Basilicata	35	81,4	48	71,6	72	56,7
Calabria	71	67,6	63	75,9	169	63,1
ITALIA INSULARE	407	73,2	421	66,4	897	67,9
Sicilia	307	81,6	331	73,1	726	86,1
Sardegna	100	55,6	90	49,7	171	35,7
ITALIA	2958	64,6	3049	44,6	7732	36,2

Figura 2 - Obiezione per categoria professionale nel servizio in cui si effettua l'interruzione volontaria di gravidanza (2020, percentuale)

Ginecologi

10% 90%



› [Eur J Contracept Reprod Health Care](#). 2015;20(4):272-82. doi: 10.3109/13625187.2014.990089.
Epub 2015 Jan 16.

Conscientious objection and waiting time for voluntary abortion in Italy

[Marco Bo](#)¹, [Carla Maria Zotti](#), [Lorena Charrier](#)

Our results suggest that when data spanning at least more than a decade are available, a trend toward an inverse correlation can be noted between the workloads for non-objectors and timely access to elective abortion.

This holds organisational and ethical implications

ART. 9

Hospitals and authorized clinics shall be

required to ensure that the requested abortion are performed

in accordance with the procedures provided for in Articles 5, 7 and 8

The regions shall monitor and guarantee the fulfilment of these requirements also through staff mobility programmes

not working!!



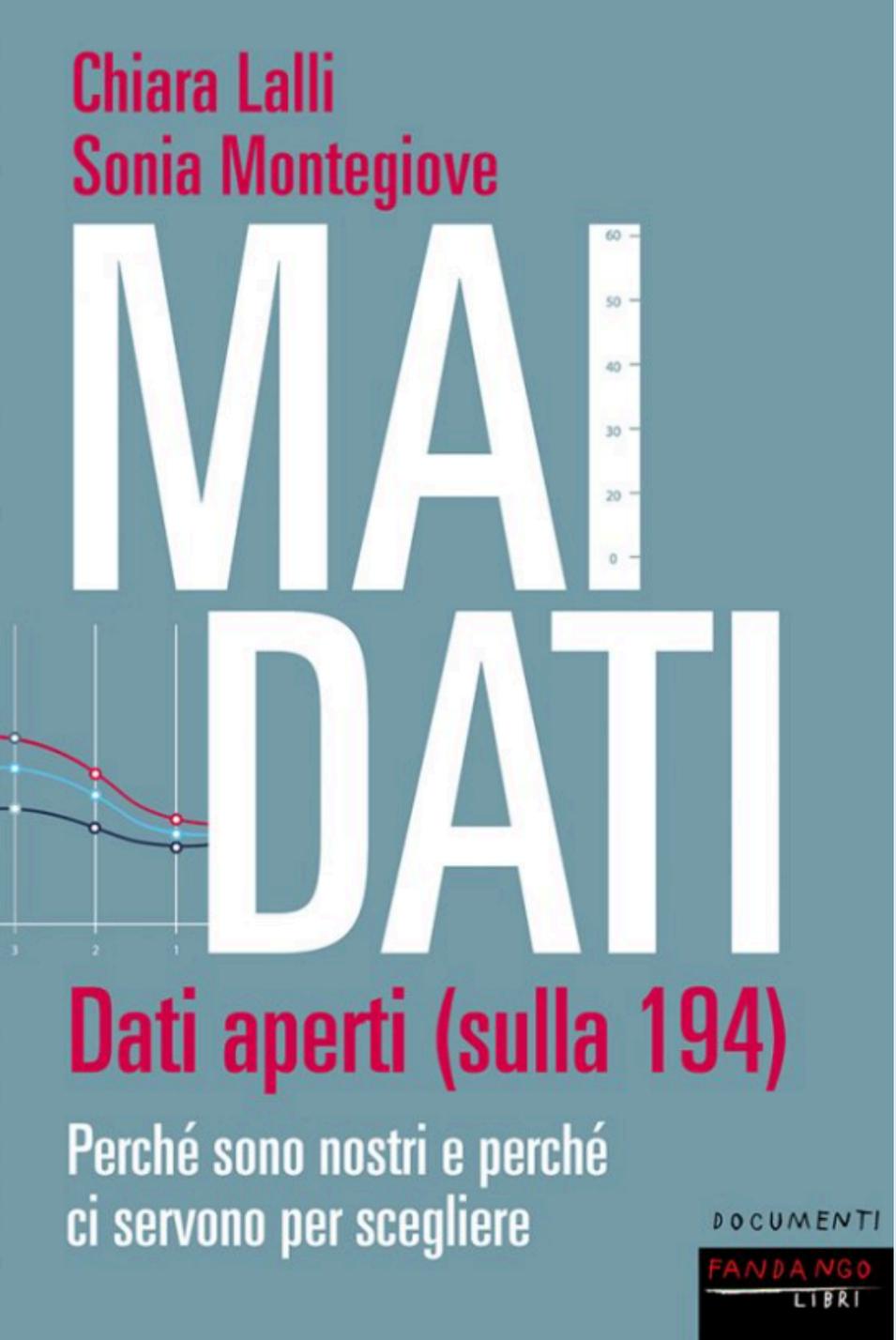
Voluntary termination of pregnancy in Italy in 2020

Conscientious objection

Despite a slight decrease, the percentage of conscientious objectors remained high in 2020 (64.6% of gynaecologists, 44.6% of anaesthetists, and 36.2% of non-medical staff), with marked regional variations.

It is to be hoped that the Regions which are currently facing the greatest challenges will explore solutions to ensure their continued compliance with Article 9 of Law 194

Chiara Lalli
Sonia Montegiove



MAI DATI

Dati aperti (sulla 194)

Perché sono nostri e perché
ci servono per scegliere

DOCUMENTI

FANDANGO
LIBRI

The Ministry of Health publish a **closed pdf**
with the data from two years earlier instead of opening them

Foia (Freedom of information act)
guarantees the right of access by the general public
to data held by public administrations

To really know the state of application of Law 194 we should know what happens in each structure

Not only the number of conscientious objectors !!

- ✓ Ob&Gyn **non-objectors who do not carry out abortions**
- ✓ the training of health workers and trainees
- ✓ the quality of the service offered and information
- ✓ the implementation of the guidelines on medical abortion

starting with opening the data



Ministerial Annual Report	Percentage CO Ob&Gyn
2022 (2020)	64,6%
2021 (2019)	67,0%
2020 (2018)	69,0%
2018 (2016)	70,9%
2017 (2015)	70,5%
2016 (2014)	70,7%
2015 (2013)	70,0%
2014 (2012)	69,6%
2013 (2011)	69,3%
2012 (2010)	69,3%
2011 (2009)	70,7%
2010 (2008)	71,5%
2009 (2007)	70,5%
2008 (2006)	69,2%
2007 (2005)	58,7%
2006 (2004)	59,5%

Official Data

Because of the high proportion of gynaecologists that are conscientious objectors and the lack of hospital facilities, in some areas of Italy the delay between the issuance of a certificate and the intervention is at least three weeks. In addition, not all areas have family planning centres, as provided by the law of 1975. Sex education programmes are not provided in schools and the Government has no special programmes for family planning; two thirds of the women nationwide either do not use contraceptives or depend upon less reliable traditional methods.



ELSEVIER

Social Science Research

Volume 87, March 2020, 102403

The impact of gynecologists' conscientious objection on abortion access

Tommaso Autorino, Francesco Mattioli, Letizia Mencarini  

Results suggest that conscientious objection hampers abortion access at the local level, being a significant driver of a woman's decision of having an abortion **out of the region of residence** and leading to **longer waiting times to have one**.

Conscientious objection appears to have a stronger impact on women living in lower-income regions or experiencing other forms of economic disadvantage.



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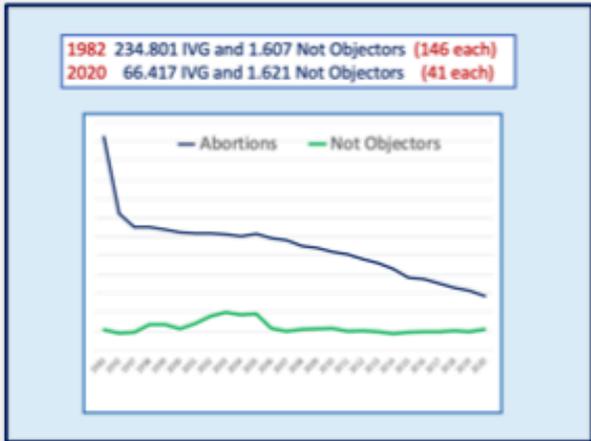
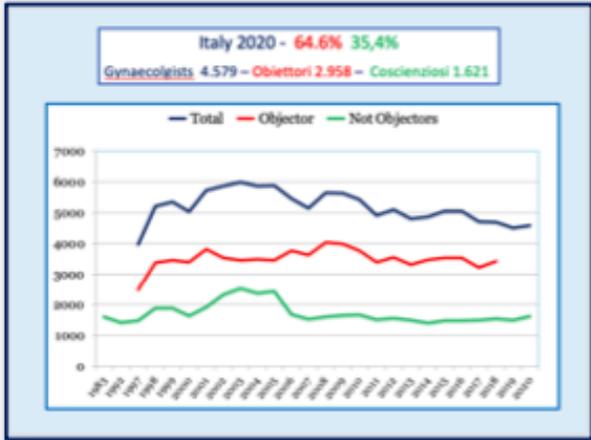
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HOW MUCH DOES CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION LIMIT ACCES TO ABORTION IN ITALY?



In Italy abortion cannot be performed in a private clinic, but you can have it only in a public hospital, usually in day hospital, with few exceptions. Since August 2020 it is possible to have abortion in public family counseling clinic, but the practice is still sporadic. Abortion is the unique medical procedure that can only be performed in public health system and In this context conscientious objection is the bottleneck of the service. However, abortions are carried out throughout the country, with 74,3% get abortion in 14 days from request.

According to the latest national data, referring to 2020, there are 4,569 gynaecologists, 2,958 objectors (64.6%) and 1621 non-objectors (35.4%). Over the decades, the number of non-objectors has remained constant, while the number of abortions has decreased by 71.7%. From 1982 to 2020, abortions fell from 234,801 to 66,413, while non-objecting gynaecologists were 1,607 in 1982 and 1,621 in 2020. This means that in 1982 there was one gynaecologist for 146 abortions and in 2020 the proportion is one gynaecologist for 41 abortions per year.





'Absurd' rules obstruct abortion access in Italy during COVID-19

Abortion has been legal in Italy for 40 years, but guidelines say medical terminations must occur in hospitals – now overwhelmed by the pandemic *Italiano*

[Francesca Visser](#)

3 April 2020, 8.50am

July 30, 2020 12:01AM EDT

Available In [English](#)

Italy: Covid-19 Exacerbates Obstacles to Legal Abortion

Between May and July 2020, Human Rights Watch interviewed 17 physicians, academics, and women's rights activists, as well as 5 women who sought abortion or abortion-related care after the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak in Italy in February. In a letter to the Health Ministry, Human Rights Watch presented research findings and requested comment, but has not received a response.

Obstacles During the Pandemic

People interviewed said that movement restrictions, lack of information, and closure of services during the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated delays in accessing abortion within the legal time frame.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on abortion in 2020

From a survey conducted among all the regional coordinators of the surveillance in May 2020 showed how the various Regions and abortion services coped with and responded to the COVID-19 emergency :

- ✓ **more than half** of the Regions stated that no issues had been reported by their facilities
- ✓ **7 Regions** introduced separate VTP pathways for SARS-CoV-2 positive women
- ✓ In **3 Regions** the procedures were concentrated into fewer facilities
- ✓ several Regions reported **a reduction in the number** of weekly medical and surgical procedures.

Telemedicine as an alternative way to access abortion in Italy and characteristics of requests during the COVID-19 pandemic **FREE**

 Karin Brandell^{1, 2}, Hannah Vanbenschoten^{1, 3}, Mirella Parachini^{4, 5}, Rebecca Gomperts⁶, Kristina Gemzell-Danielsson^{1, 7}

Introduction Induced abortion is legal in Italy but with restrictions. The online abortion provider Women on Web (WoW) serves as an alternative way to access abortion. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected sexual and reproductive health worldwide. Italy was one of the first countries hit by the pandemic and imposed strict lockdown measures. We aimed to understand why women requested WoW abortion in Italy and how this was affected by the pandemic.

Methods We conducted an observational study analysing requests made to WoW before and during the pandemic. We analysed 778 requests for medical abortion from Italy between 1 March 2019 to 30 November 2020 and compared the characteristics of requests submitted before and during the pandemic. We also performed subgroup analysis on teenagers and COVID-19-specific requests.

Results There was an increase in requests during the COVID-19 pandemic compared with the previous year (12% in the first 9 months). The most common reasons for requesting a telemedicine abortion through WoW were privacy-related (40.9%); however, this shifted to COVID-19-specific (50.3%) reasons during the pandemic. Requests from teenagers (n=61) were more frequently made at later gestational stages (p=0.003), had a higher prevalence of rape (p=0.003) as the cause of unwanted pregnancies, and exhibited less access to healthcare services compared with adult women.

clandestine abortions



Estimates indicate a **stabilisation** of the phenomenon in recent years

In 2016 out of 84,926 abortions, the estimate of 10,000-13,000 =
% between 11.7 and 15.3%

In 2020 out of 66,413 abortions, the estimate of 10,000-13,000 =
% between 15 and 19.6% !!!

Italy approves outpatient use for abortion pill

Aug. 8, 2020 at 12:12 pm

By [The Associated Press](#)

The Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Women in Italy can now use the abortion pill on an outpatient basis rather than be hospitalized to terminate a pregnancy.

Italy's health minister, Roberto Speranza, announced the change in guidelines in a tweet Saturday. He said it was based on scientific evidence and was “an important step forward” in line with Italy's 1978 law legalizing abortion.

what are other
words for
conundrum?

~~enigma, riddle, puzzle, mystery,
brain-teaser, poser, problem,
secret, closed book, question~~



the italian conundrum ?



HOW MUCH DOES CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION LIMIT ACCES TO ABORTION IN ITALY?



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	Objectors	Non-Objectors	Abortions (IVG)	IVG x each
NORD	1.252	928	31.025	33
Piemonte	214	135	5.637	42
Valle d'Aosta	3	9	116	13
Lombardia	451	292	10.720	37
Bozano	60	11	532	48
Trento	14	25	559	22
Veneto	241	121	4.129	34
Friuli Ven. Giulia	59	57	1.251	22
Liguria	63	48	2.056	43
Emilia-Romagna	187	229	6.025	26
CENTRO	584	339	14.518	43
Toscana	189	158	4.897	31
Umbria	57	24	824	34
Marche	91	39	1.351	35
Lazio	247	118	7.446	63
SUD	675	203	14.959	74
Abruzzo	109	21	1.358	65
Molise	24	5	258	52
Campania	202	73	5.943	81
Puglia	234	59	5.325	90
Basilicata	35	8	430	11
Calabria	71	34	1.645	48
ISOLE	407	149	5.911	40
Sicilia	307	69	4.518	65
Sardegna	100	80	1.393	17
ITALIA	2.958	1621	66.413	41

There are regional differences, but a significant picture comes from the data of the two smaller regions, Valle d'Aosta and Molise, usually located on the extremes. In Molise there are 24 objectors (82.8%) and 5 non-objectors (17.2%), which perform 258 abortions per year (5 per week) and have the shortest waiting times in Italy, 93.7% in 14 days. In Valle d'Aosta, on the other hand, there are 3 objectors (25.0%), and 9 non-objectors (75.0%), which perform 116 abortions per year (2 per week) and have one of the longest waiting times in Italy, 61.5% in 14 days.

In a recent analysis of the four hospitals in the Turin, it emerged that non-objectors gynaecologists are 64 (42.5%) out of 137 and that 91% of abortions are carried out in the largest hospital, the only one with a specific abortion unit. In this hospital the non-objectors are 32 (41.5%) out of 77. The male are 9 (28.1%) out of 32 and the female are 23 (52,3%) out of 44.

Despite the political controversy and the clamor of conscientious objection by 2/3 of gynecologists, abortions are practiced throughout Italy. Out of over 400,000 doctors, of which 240,000 working in the National Health System, only 4,539 are authorized to abort. 2,958 objectors (64.6%) and 1,621 non-objectors (35.4%). The data confirm that potential and actual limits depend more on the organization of the service, which is a public political monopoly, and less on conscientious objection.