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Study shows vast majority of Irish women who took abortion pills feel they made right decision

The study examined the experiences of women who accessed abortion pills online.

A NEW STUDY focussing on the experiences of Irish women who took abortion pills to terminate a pregnancy has found that the overwhelming majority expressed gratitude and relief that they were able to access the pills.

The study – published in the **British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology** – also found that the vast majority of women would recommend the pills to other women in a similar situation.

The study looks at the characteristics and experiences of women who accessed abortion pills online in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

It examines the experiences of over 1,000 women who took the pills to terminate a pregnancy with help from the online medicine initiative Women on Web between January 2010 and December 2012.

Women on Web is a website based in the Netherlands which sends the abortion pills Mifepristone and Misoprostol to women who are unable to access them in their home countries.

The pills induce an abortion in women up to 10 weeks of pregnancy.

People wishing to access the pills complete an online consultation consisting of 25 questions and are asked for donations of at least €90, €80 or €70 depending on a person's economic circumstances.

It is illegal to take them in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The study found that the only regret women who had taken the medication had was that they were doing something illegal in their home country.

In April a **21-year-old woman was handed a suspended sentence** after her housemates reported her to authorities for taking the two pills.

Right decision



(File photo) Briana O'Doherty, from Tallaght at Connolly station, Dublin, after she took a train with other pro-choice campaigners from Dublin to Belfast to bring back abortion pills unavailable in the Republic of Ireland.

Image: Brian Lawless/PA Archive/Press Association Images

Almost every woman questioned (97%) felt they had made the right decision in accessing and using the medication at home and 98% said they would recommend it to others in a similar situation.

In total, 5,650 women requested the abortion pills from Women on Web between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2015.

The study – carried out Abigail Aiken and her colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin – found that the vast majority (85%) were between 20 and 30 years old. 63% were already mothers.

The most common reason women cited for choosing to terminate their pregnancy was not being able to cope with a child at that stage of their lives (63%).

Close to half (44%) said they had no money to adequately provide for a child. Close to a third (30%) said they were too young to have a child or wanted to complete their education.

The most commonly reported feelings after having completed the procedure were relief (70%) and satisfaction (36%).

Over a quarter said they were happy (26.8%) and 22% said they were pleased (22%).

The vast majority (94%) expressed gratitude for being able to access the pills online.

Abortion is illegal in Ireland except in rare cases under the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution which grants the equal right to life to the mother and the unborn child.

A Constitutional Convention met for the first time on Saturday, with the Eighth Amendment to be the first thing to be discussed when it meets again on 25 November.

Read: **[Day one of Citizens' Assembly hears people with 'diverse views' are 'destroyed' on social media \(http://www.thejournal.ie/citizens-assembly-meeting-2-3028532-Oct2016/\)](http://www.thejournal.ie/citizens-assembly-meeting-2-3028532-Oct2016/)**

Read: **[Woman \(21\) given suspended sentence for taking abortion drugs \(http://www.thejournal.ie/belfast-court-abortion-pills-case-2697513-Apr2016/\)](http://www.thejournal.ie/belfast-court-abortion-pills-case-2697513-Apr2016/)**

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