

## Abortion in a global world: using technology to cross national borders

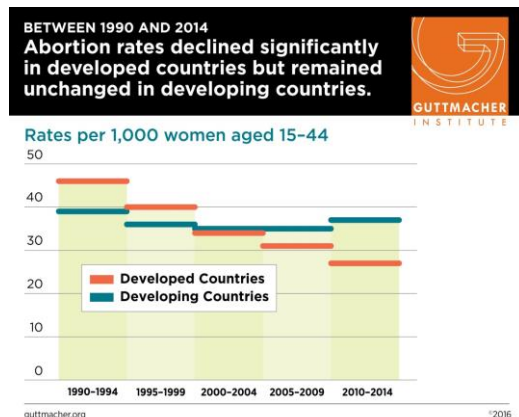


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Australasian board member of FIAPAC

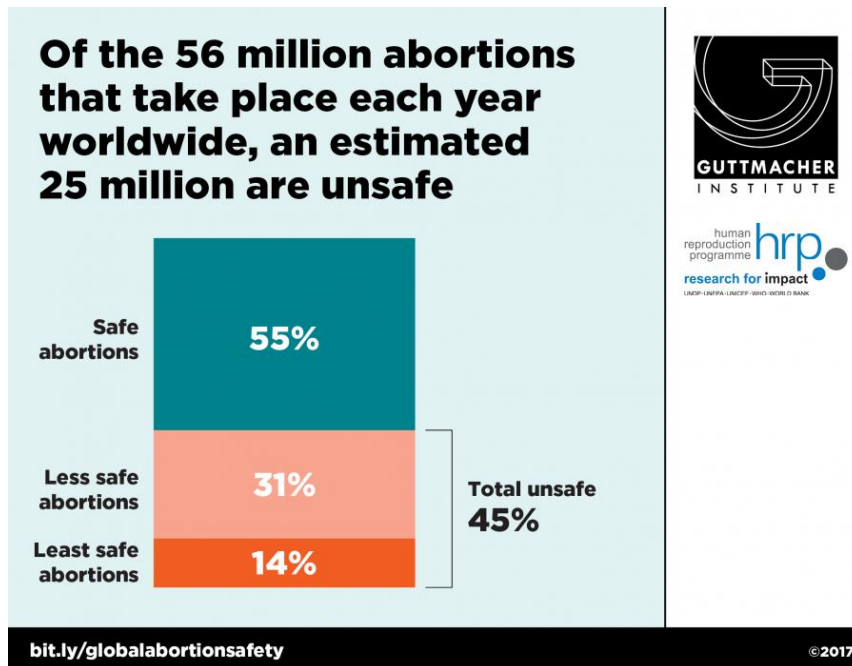
## Abortion in a global world

WHO 2010–2014:

- 25% of all pregnancies ended in an abortion
- 56 million abortions worldwide each year
- 35 abortions per 1000 women aged between 15–44 years



Abortion, surgical or medical, is a safe procedure when performed by appropriately trained providers using correct techniques



## Unsafe abortion: new classifications in a changing world

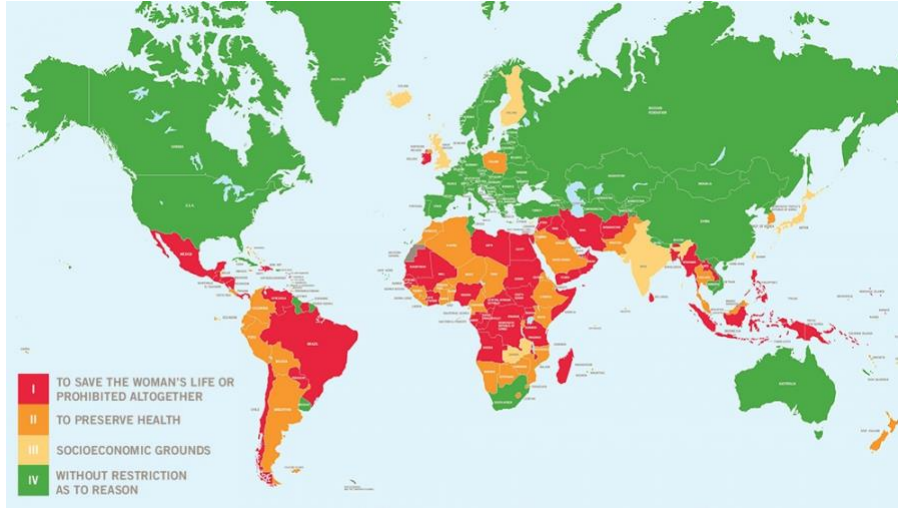
- **Least safe:** untrained persons using dangerous methods:
  - sticks, bicycle spokes, toxic solutions pumped into the uterus, direct trauma
  - drinking poisons, bleach, massive doses of medications
- **Less safe:** trained providers using unsafe methods or untrained persons using 'safe' methods
  - sharp curettage; incorrect or unsupervised use of misoprostol

Responsible for 4.7 – 13.2% maternal deaths (43,000 deaths) & an estimated 7 million complications annually



## The World's Abortion Laws map 2014

25% of the world's population live in countries with highly restrictive abortion laws



Center for Reproductive Rights [www.reproductiverights.org](http://www.reproductiverights.org)

**Restrictive laws do not stop women from having abortions. They mainly make the procedure clandestine and often unsafe.**



### Abortion rates

Countries where abortion is prohibited altogether or permitted only to save a woman's life

**37** per 1,000 women aged 15-44

Countries where abortion is available on request

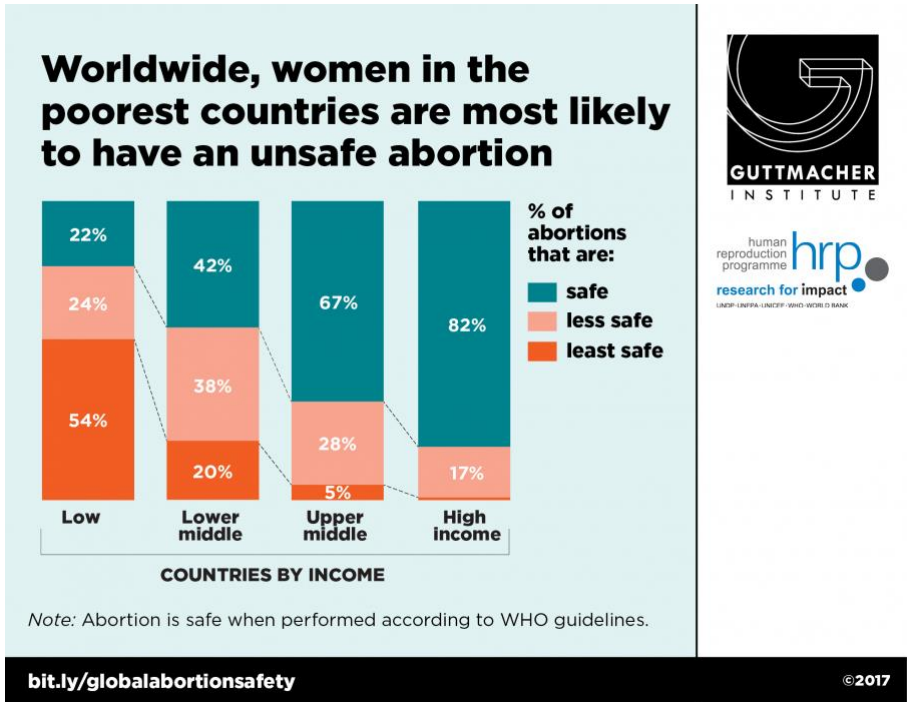
**34** per 1,000 women aged 15-44



[guttmacher.org](http://guttmacher.org)

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Using technology to improve access and reduce unsafe abortions



## Providing safe abortion in a global world



- Women on Waves founded in 1999
- Safe abortions provided on a Dutch ship outside the territorial waters of countries where abortion is illegal
- Boat campaigns in Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain & Mexico
- Women on Web set up in 2006



[www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au) | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [bookshop](#)

clinical services & information | education & training | research | international development  
Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health



## Women on Web: a digital community providing MTOP

*'allowing women the possibility of taking their lives in their own hands irrespective of the legality of abortion or the willingness of doctors (to provide services)'*

- women must:
  - live in a country where access to safe abortion is restricted
  - be less than 10 weeks pregnant
  - have access to emergency care and no severe illnesses



**Pregnancy Calculator**

## Abortion without borders

- Questionnaire followed by online medical consultation (17 languages)
- In countries where the website is blocked answers can be sent via email
- Mifepristone and misoprostol prescribed & delivered by post
- Multilingual helpdesk teams available in some countries
- More than 10,000 emails received each month from across the globe

[www.womenonweb.org](http://www.womenonweb.org)



Self reported outcomes and adverse events after medical abortion through online telemedicine: population based study in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland  
BMJ 2017 Aitken A et al

- 2010-12: drugs sent to 1636 women
- 1023 confirmed use; FU information for 1000
- 781 (78%) <7 weeks; 219 (22%) 7-9 weeks
- 94.7% (95% CI 93.1 - 96.0) reported completion without surgical intervention
- 7 reported a blood transfusion & 26 reported antibiotic use



Self sourced medical abortion using online telemedicine can be highly effective, and outcomes compare favourably with in clinic protocols.

## Unsafe abortions are almost entirely preventable

- Evidence that women can safely carry out medical abortion themselves at home
- Technology can empower women through information to carry out safe medical abortion rather than resorting to unsafe means
- When abortion is made legal, safe, and easily accessible (medical and surgical), women's health rapidly improves



Thank you  
 & with thanks to Alanna Galati  
 Senior Policy Manager, Guttmacher Institute

