

Workshop 1: Measuring abortion incidence

Guttmacher Institute

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Workshop Goals & Questions

- Review methodologies for estimating incidence
- What are the key methodologies for measuring abortion incidence?
- What ethical issues (including protection of human subjects) must be addressed in application of methods?
- What challenges exist in specific country contexts to apply these methodologies?

Workshop Goals & Questions

- What are their relative merits?
- Are existing methodologies adequate or is further development of methodologies needed?
- Are there special methodological problems the field needs to address?
- How can current methodologies be adapted to capture information on changes in types of methods used (e.g. increase in use of cytotec, medical abortion)?
- Which data are important to collect before and after abortion restrictions change or abortion becomes legal?

Why measure abortion incidence at country level?

- Wide range within subregions
- Incidence = putting abortion “on the map” or increasing awareness
- Incidence allows us to quantify the role of abortion in fertility control
- Incidence = basis for understanding consequences and costs
- Stimulate policy and program reform to prevent unintended pregnancy, to improve post-abortion care
- Measure impact of law reform

Barriers to researching abortion

- Difficult to obtain high quality data because:
 - Sensitivity of issue – stigma, values
 - Stringent legal restrictions
- Official statistics often poor or non-existent
- Women greatly underreport on surveys
- Researchers continue to work on methodologies to compensate for these problems

Criteria to consider in assessing methodologies for Estimating Incidence

- Accuracy and underreporting
- Representativeness - national or subnational
- Comparability across time
- Comparability across areas
- Ease of replication
- Importance of triangulation

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Abortion Incidence for Specific Countries

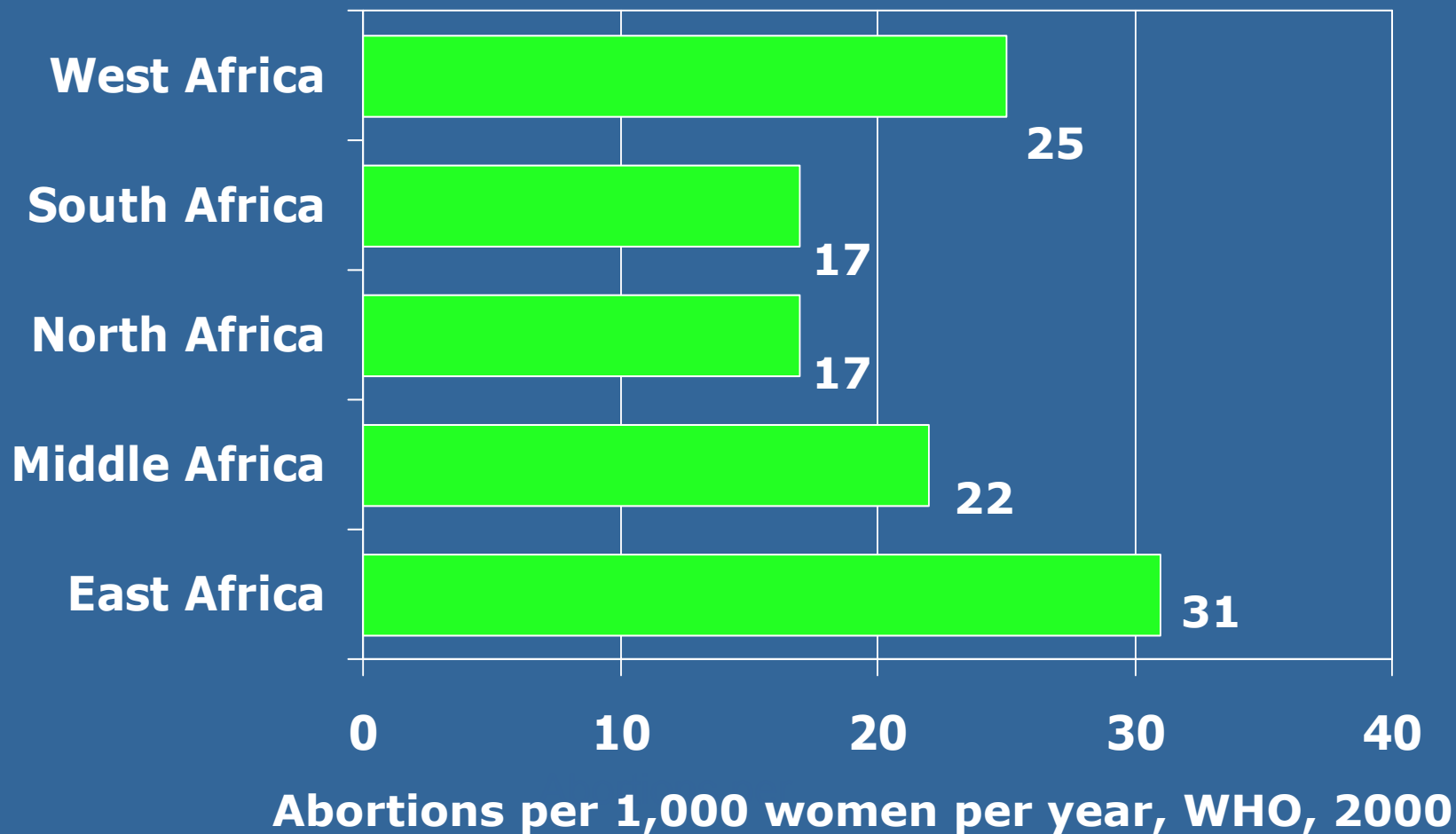
- Estimates for small number of countries
- National and sub-national coverage
- Public and private sector coverage
- Range in incidence across countries within region can be large
- Important to measure change

Abortion Incidence in Africa

WHO estimates for 2000:

- 4.2 million unsafe abortions
 - Unsafe abortions are those that are provided by untrained persons or in unhygienic or clandestine conditions
- 24 unsafe abortions/1000 women annually
- 14 unsafe abortions for every 100 live births
- Some safe and legal abortions, especially in Tunisia and South Africa

Incidence varies across sub-regions



Countries vary widely in abortion incidence

- Ghana (1997-8) – 17 per 1000 women of reproductive age
- Egypt (1996) – 23 per 1000
- Nigeria (1996) - 25 per 1000
- Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (2001) – 40 per 1000
- Uganda (2003) - 54 per 1000