

# Abortion Worldwide

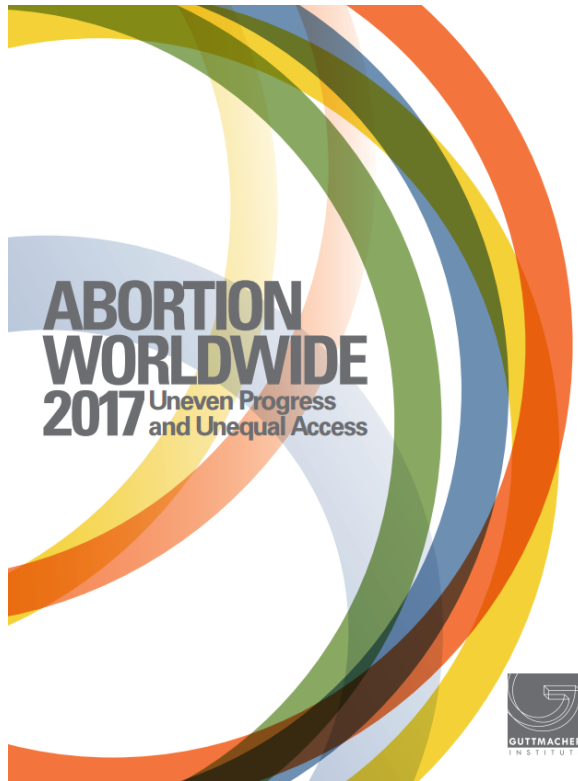
## Uneven Progress and Unequal Access

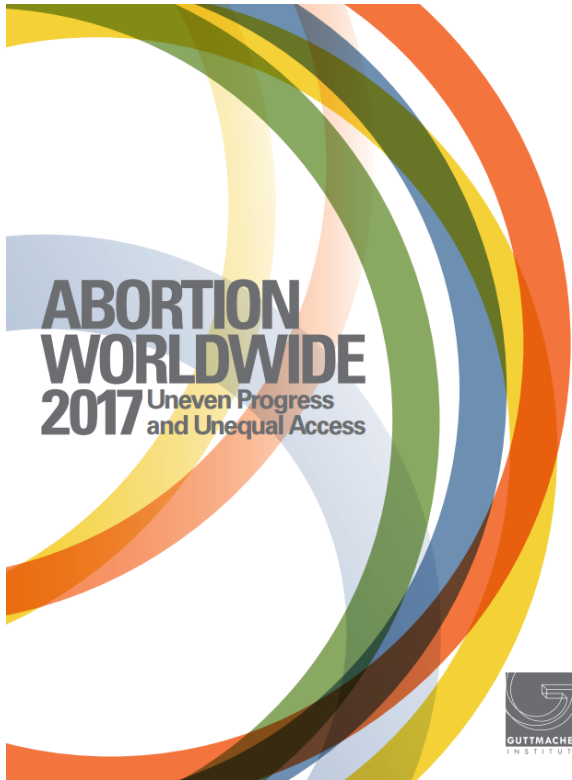
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FIAPAC  
September 2018







**BRIEFING PAPER**

**ABORTION WORLDWIDE:  
20 YEARS OF REFORM**



**CENTER  
FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE  
RIGHTS**

**Global, regional, and subregional classification of abortions by safety, 2010-14: estimates from a Bayesian hierarchical model**

**SAFETY**

**Introduction**

**Methods**

**Results**

**Conclusions**

**Articles**

**Global, regional, and subregional trends in unintended pregnancy and its outcomes from 1990 to 2014: estimates from a Bayesian hierarchical model**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Methods**

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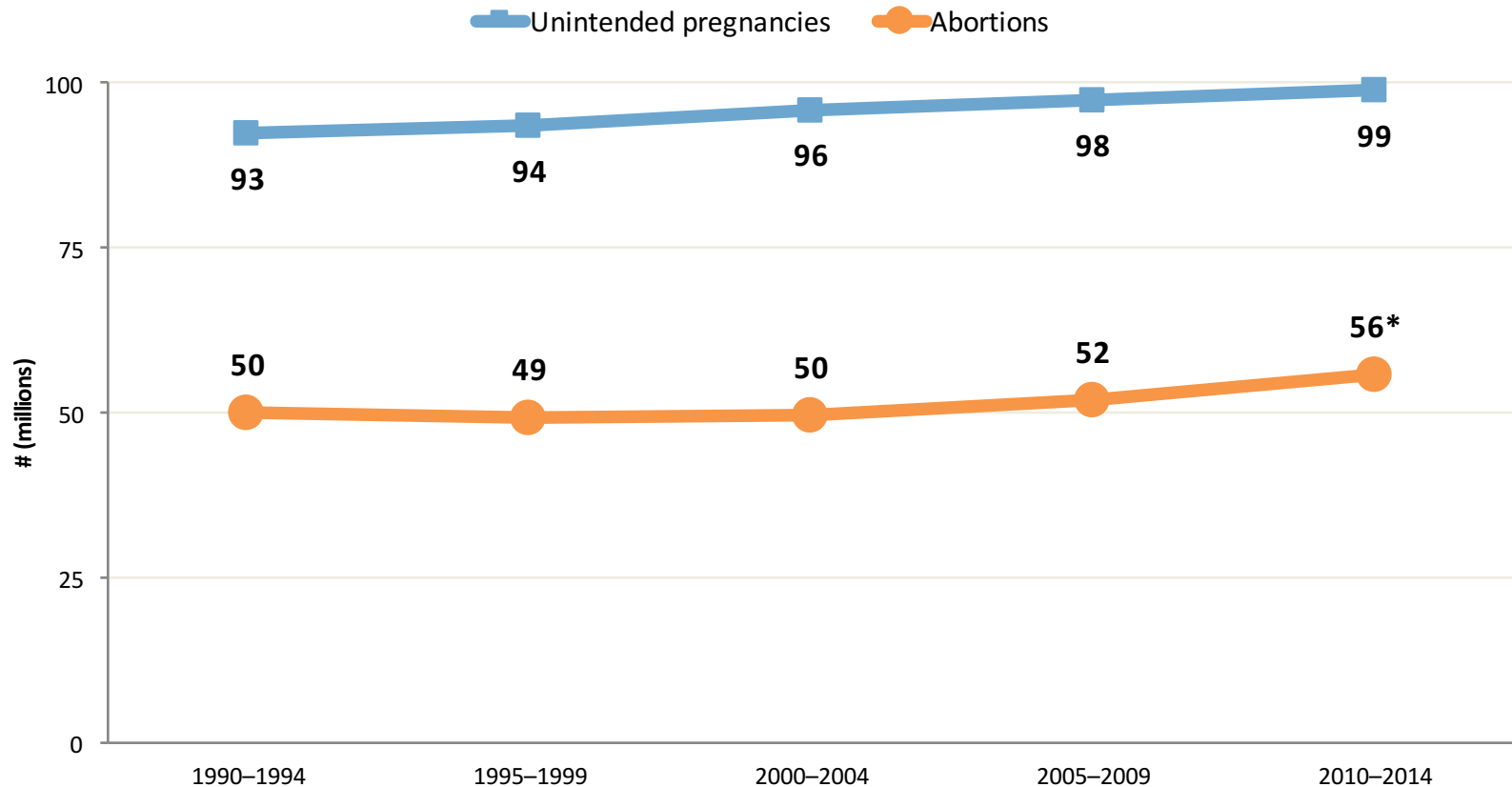
**Results**

**Conclusions**

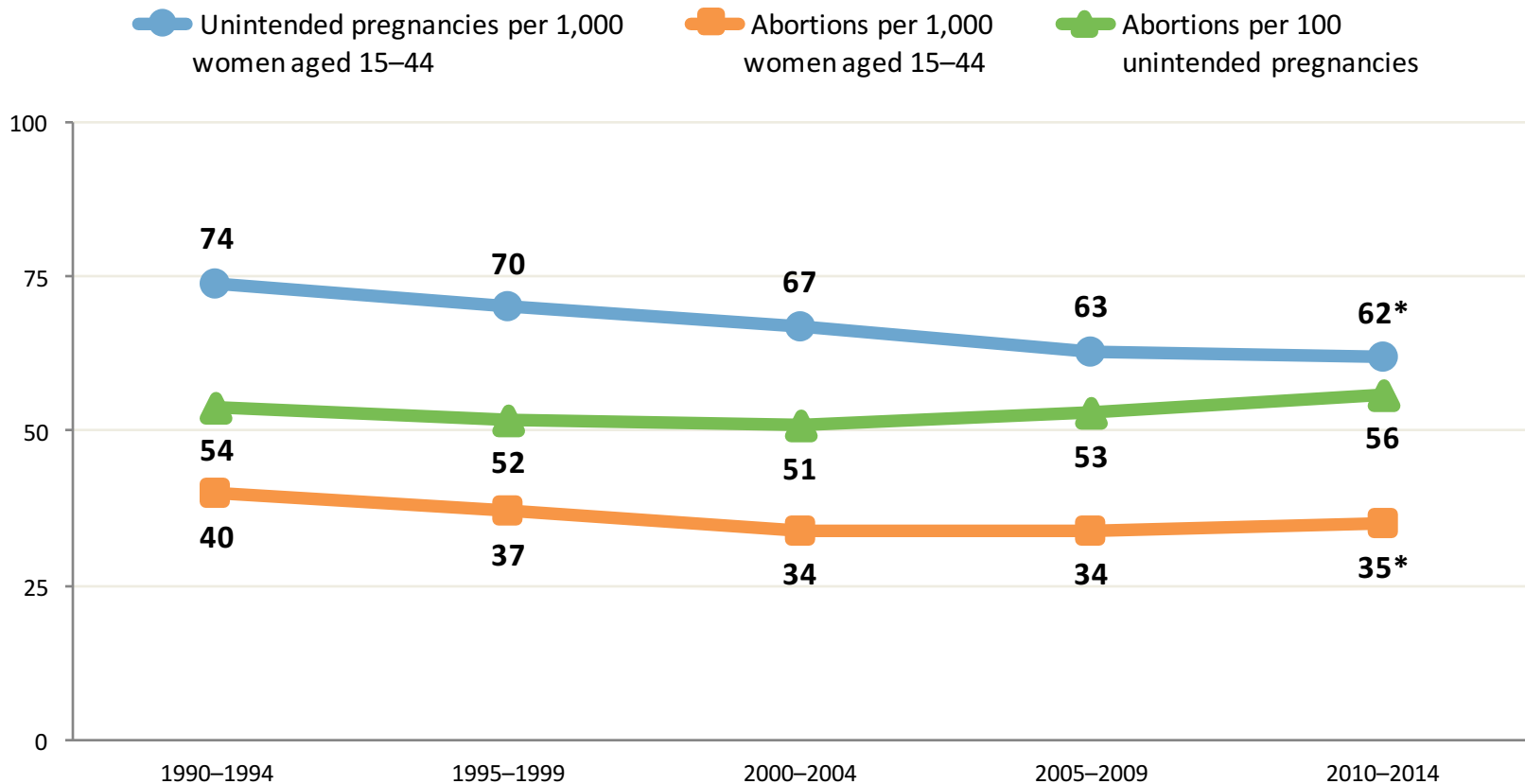
## **Key topics**

- **Global trends in the incidence of abortion and unintended pregnancy**
- **Abortion laws around the world**
- **The safety of abortions obtained**
- **Consequences of unsafe abortion**
- **Characteristics of women who have abortions**

# About 99 million unintended pregnancies and 56 million abortions take place each year

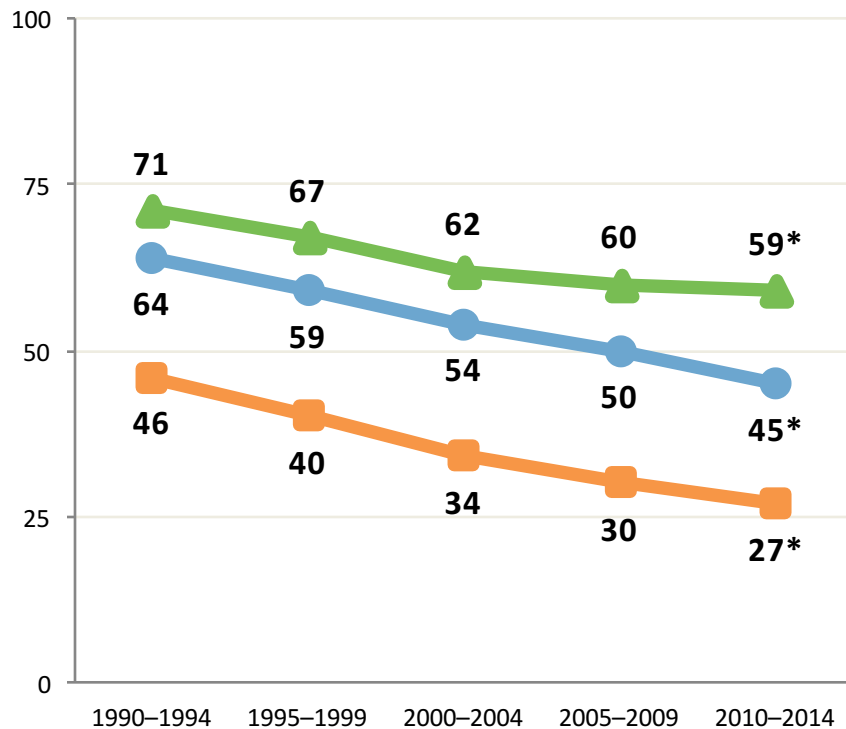


# Unintended pregnancy and abortion rates declined globally

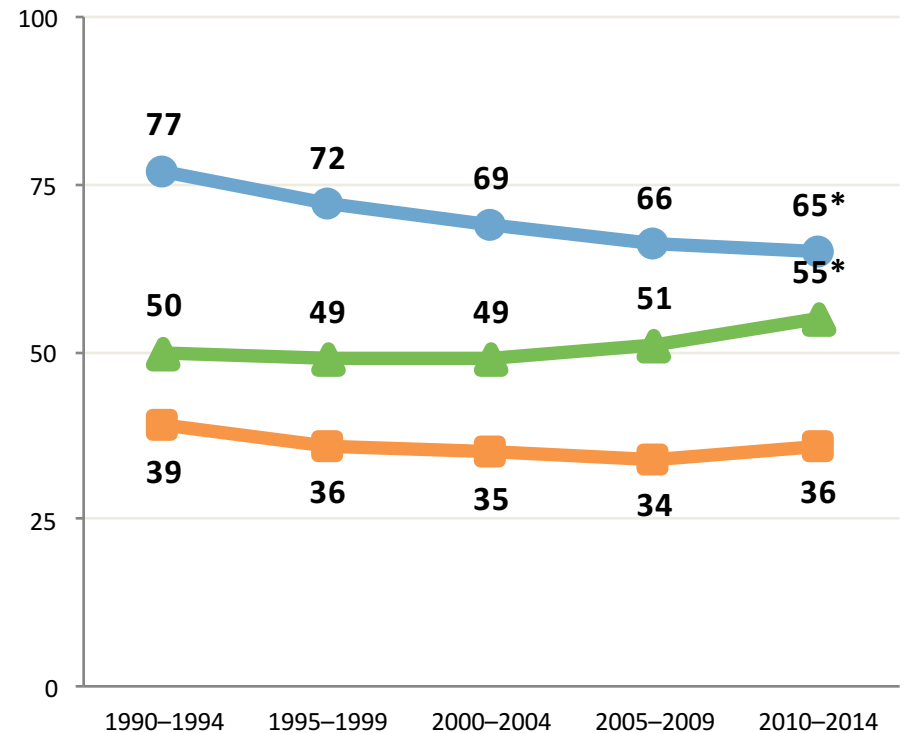


# Unintended pregnancy rates remain higher in the developing world than in the developed world

## Developed world

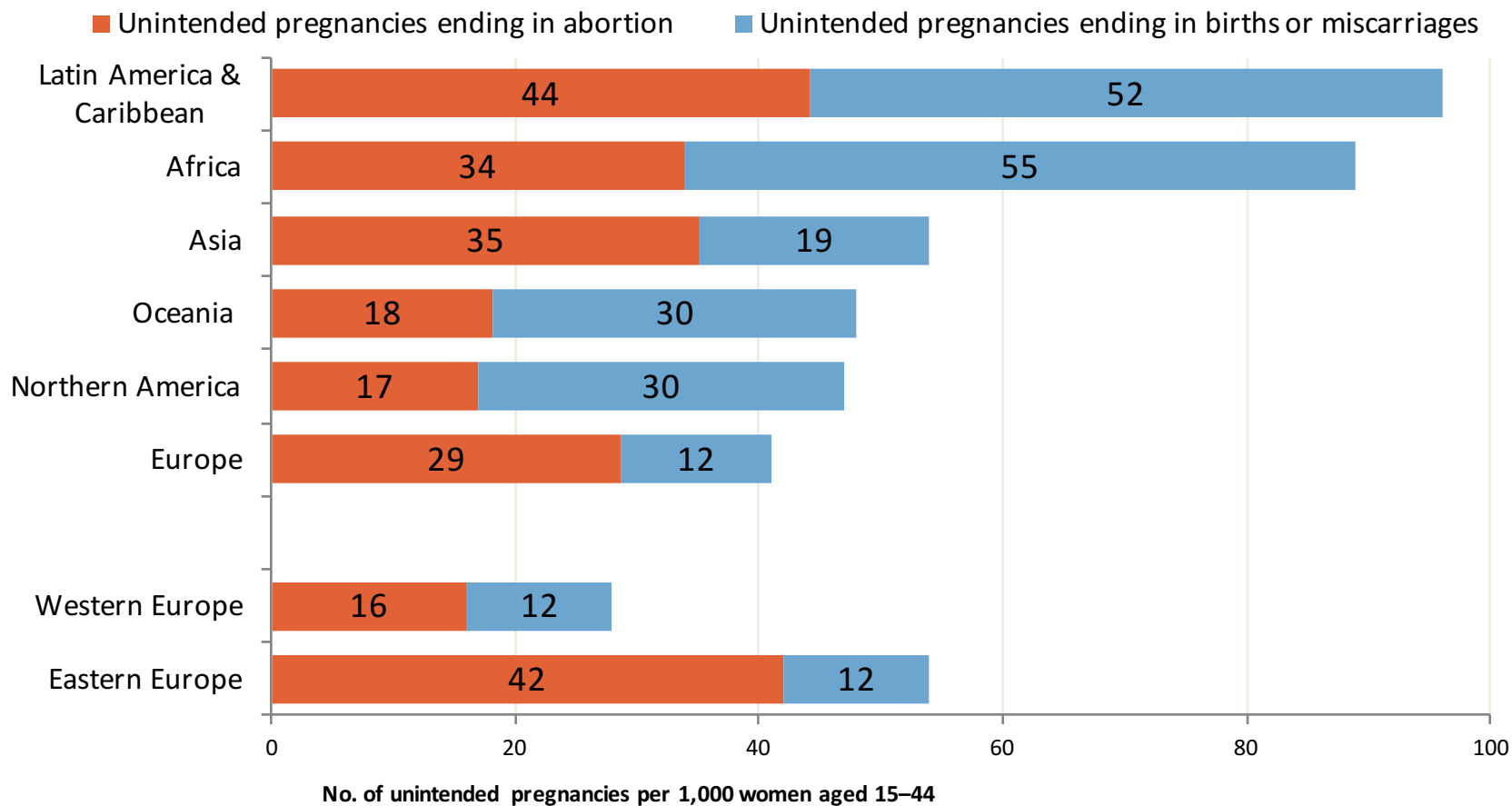


## Developing world



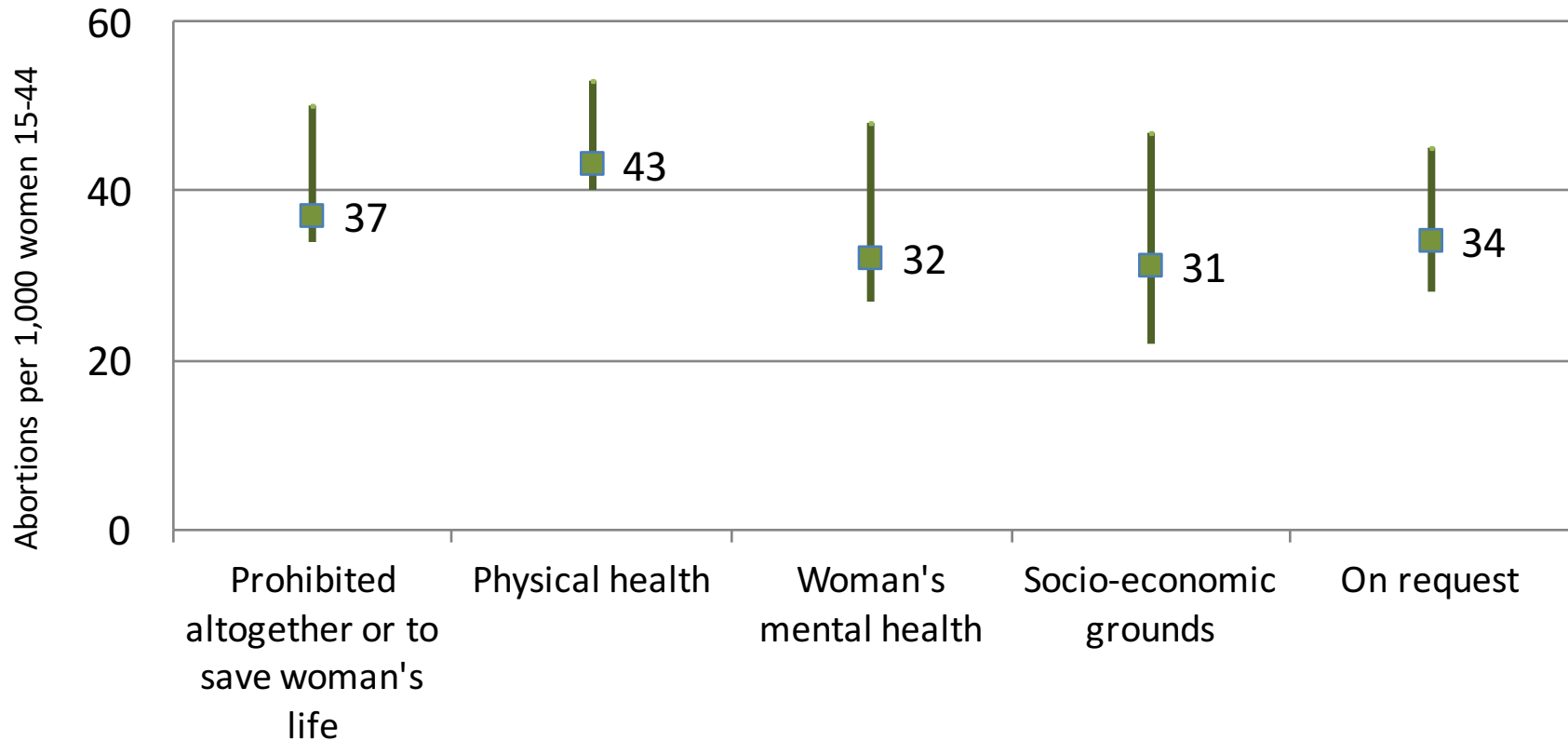
● Unintended pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-44
 ■ Abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44
 ▲ Abortions per 100 unintended pregnancies

## Unintended pregnancy and abortion rates are highest in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa





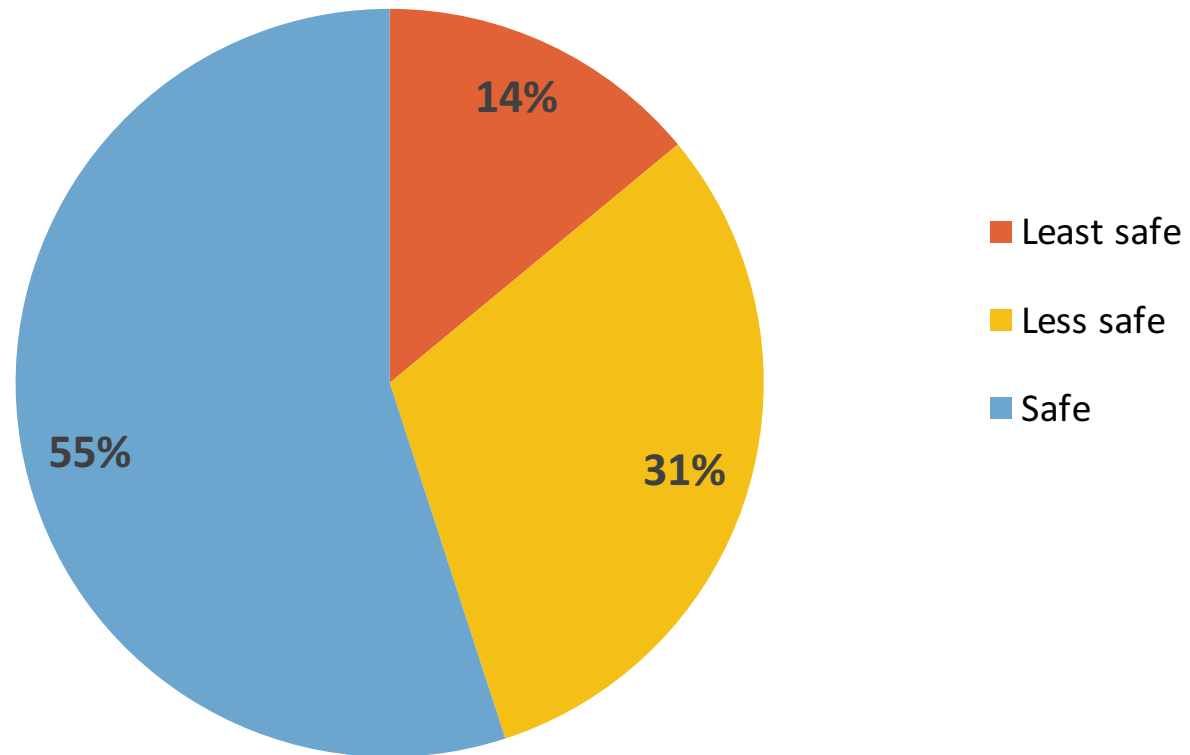
## The abortion rate is similar in countries with restrictive and liberal abortion laws



## What is an unsafe abortion?

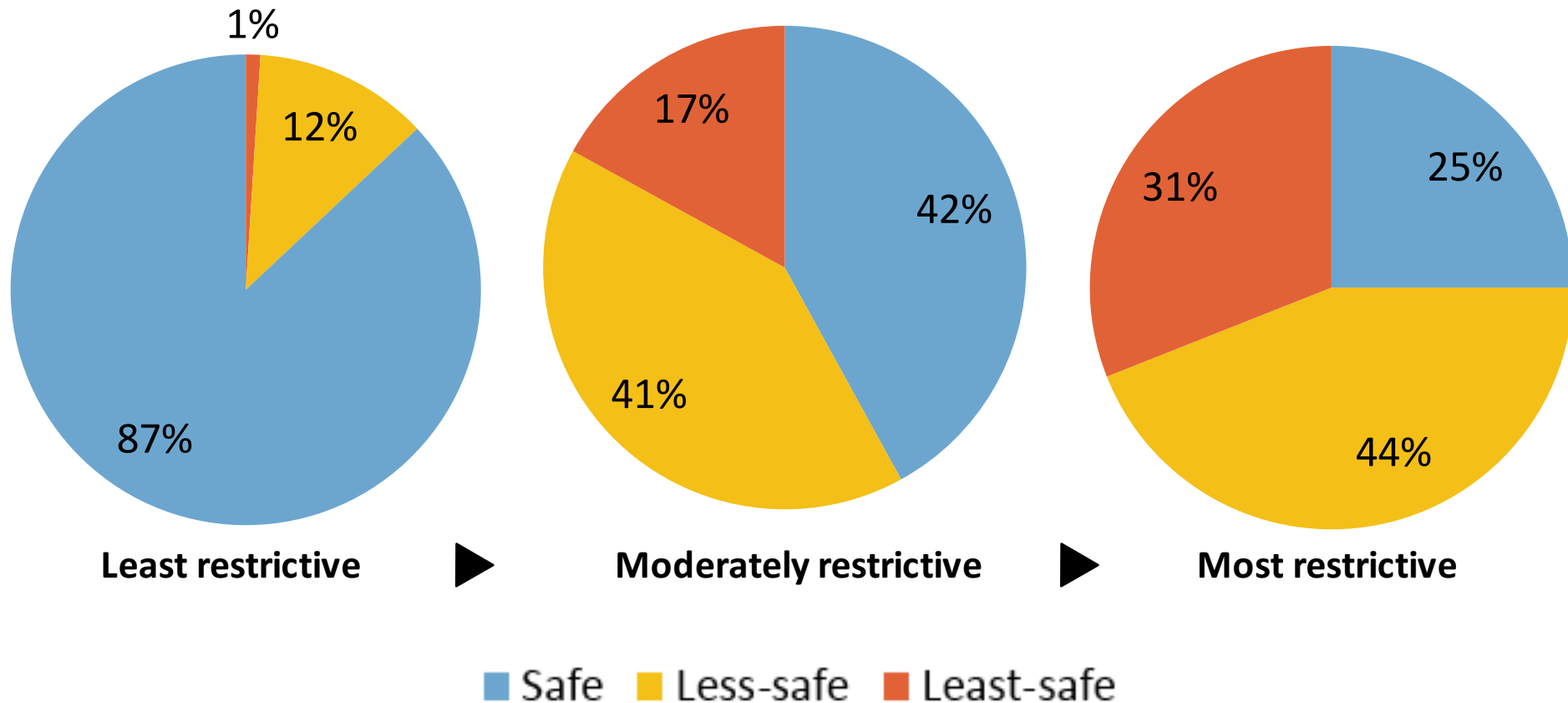
- WHO and Guttmacher recently developed three categories of safety:
  - Safe abortions are those done (a) by a trained person and (b) using a WHO-approved method
  - Less safe abortions are those that meet only one of the above criteria
  - Least safe abortions meet neither criterion.

## 25 million unsafe abortions are done under unsafe conditions each year



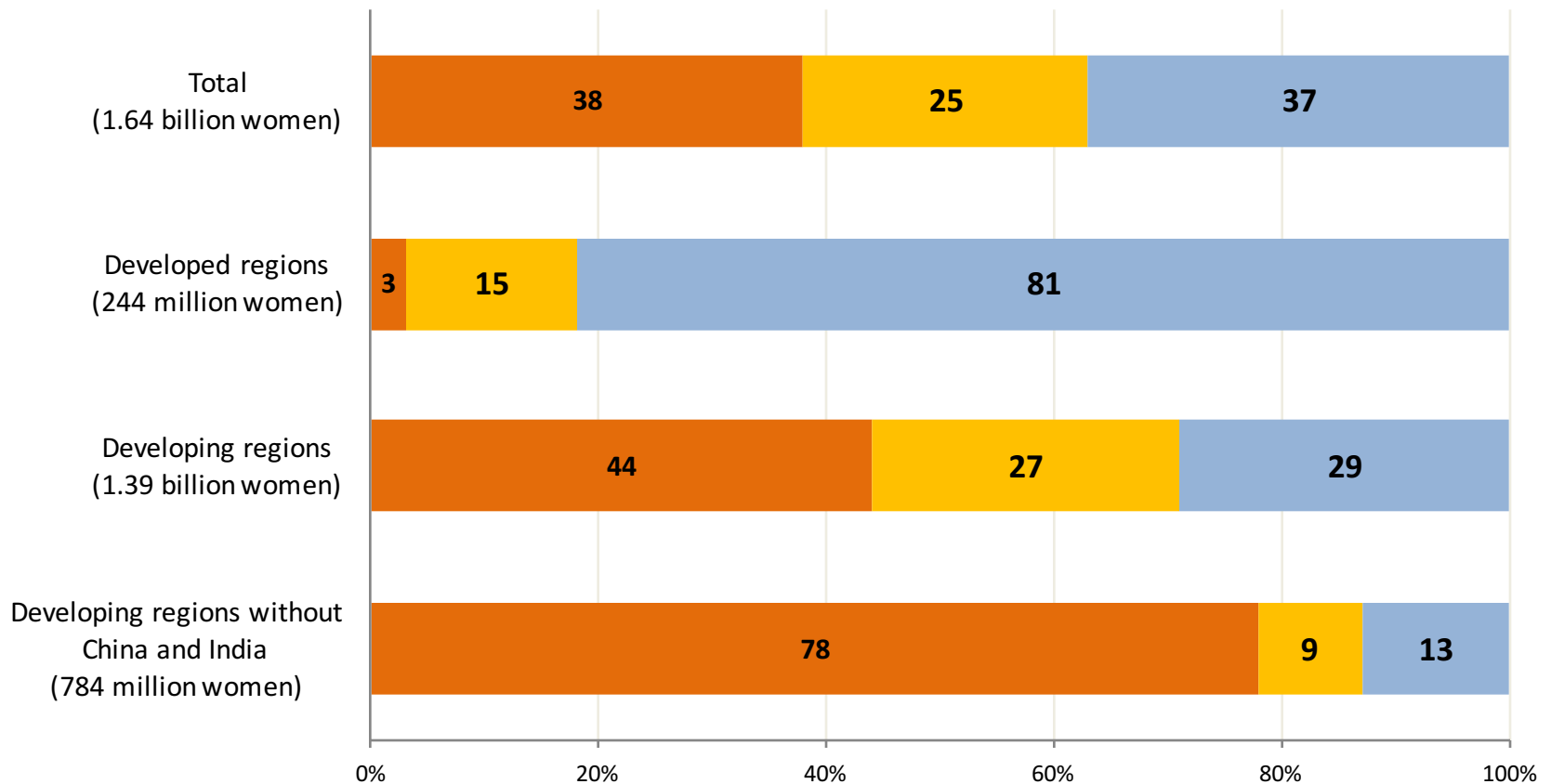
25.1 million unsafe abortions, 2010–2014

# Abortions in countries with restrictive abortion laws are more likely to be unsafe



## About 3% of women in developed countries live under restrictive abortion laws

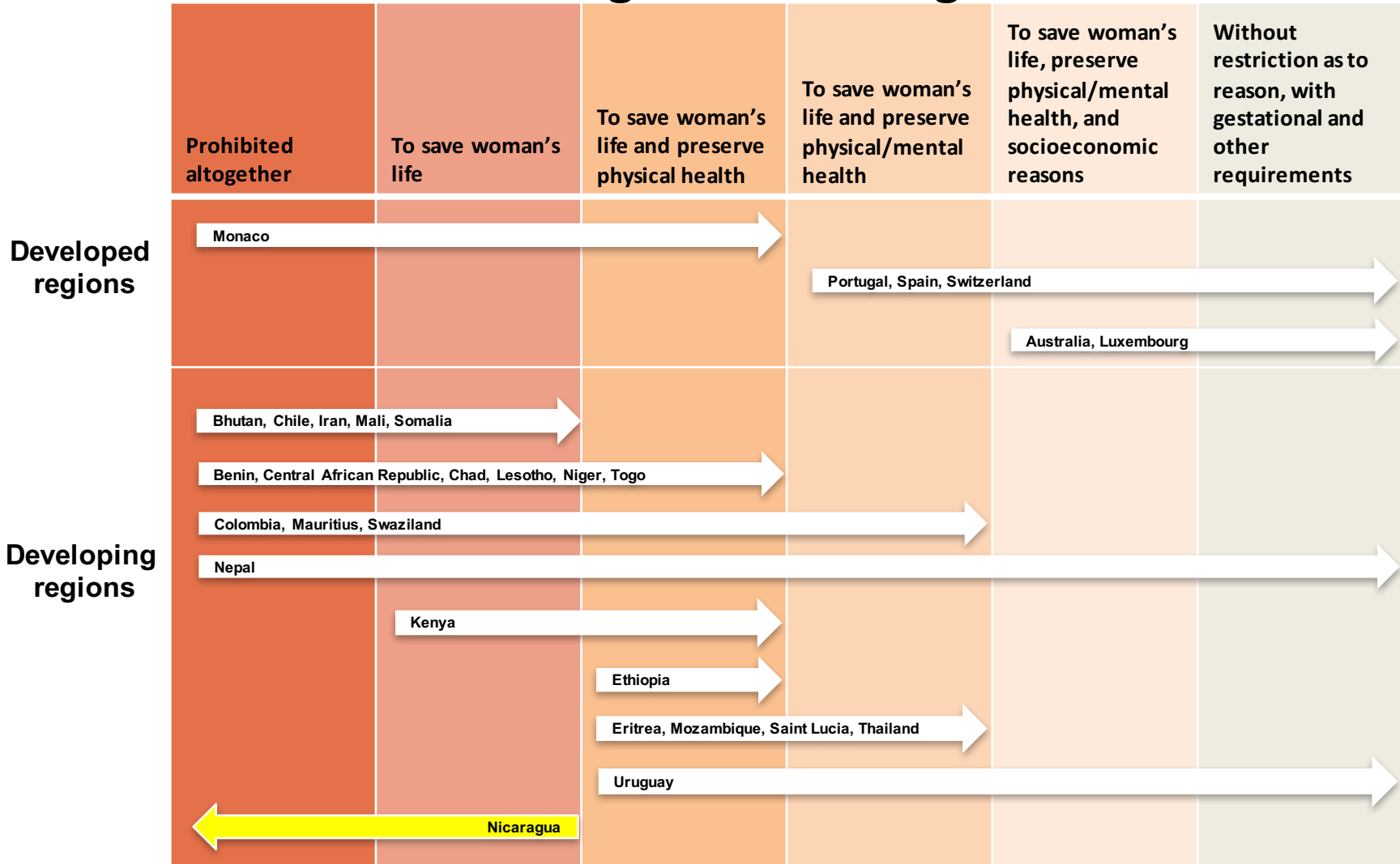
■ None, to save woman's life, physical health 
 ■ To preserve mental health, socioeconomic grounds 
 ■ Without restriction



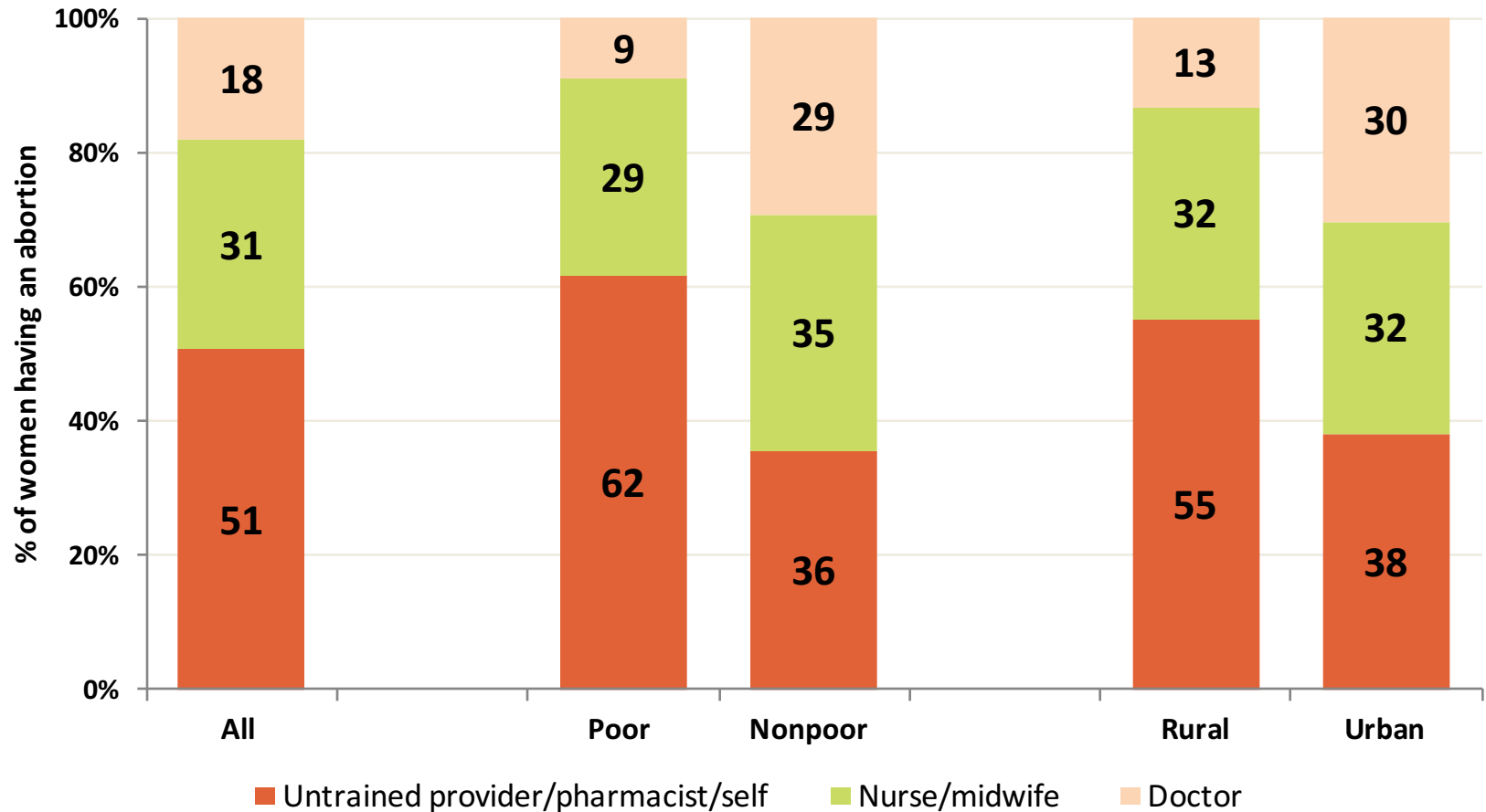
## Changes in legal status of abortion

- Of the 28 countries that substantially changed their abortion laws since 2000, 27 expanded the grounds for legal abortion.
- Another six countries made narrow expansions to the grounds under which abortion is legal, to include cases of rape, incest or fetal anomaly.
- In all, 33 countries expanded legal criteria for abortion between 2000 and 2017.

# Almost all countries that changed their abortion laws since 2000 broadened grounds for legal abortion

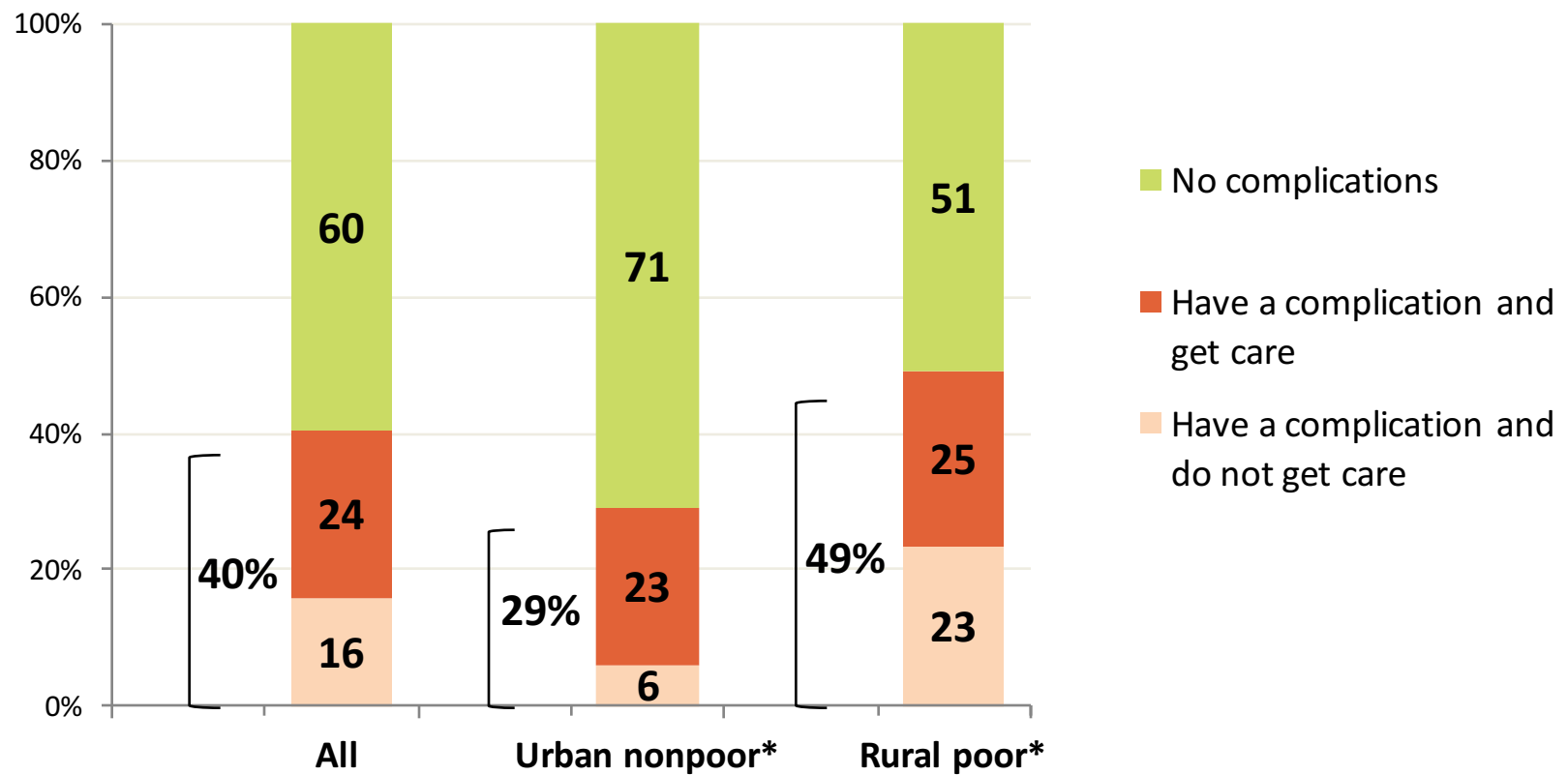


## In 10 legally restrictive countries, poor and rural women were particularly likely to use an untrained provider



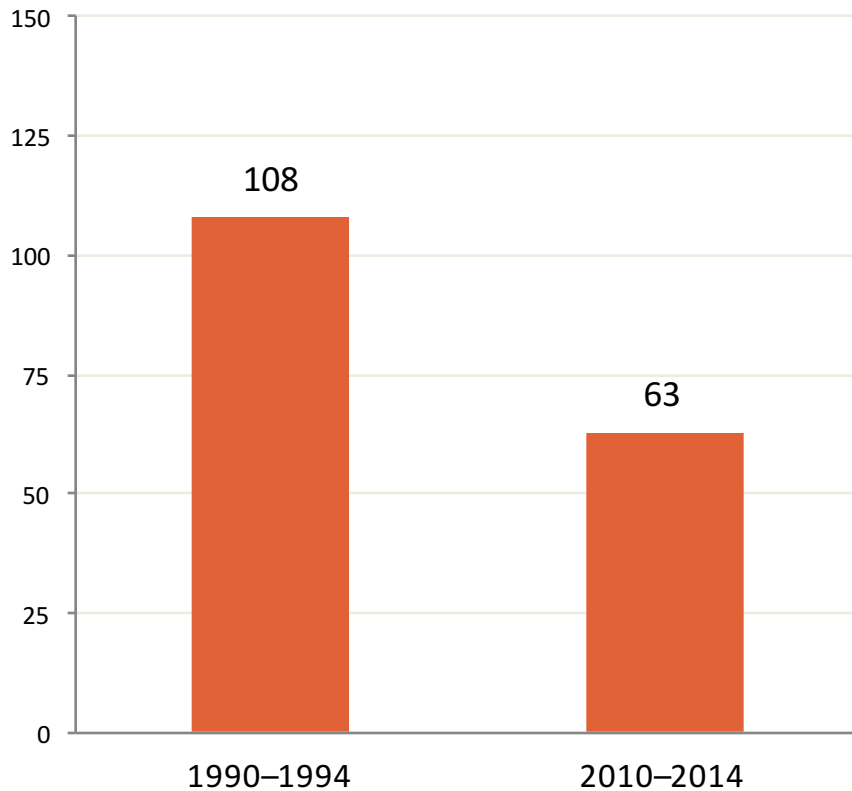


## In 14 countries where unsafe abortion is prevalent, rural poor women are most likely to experience complications

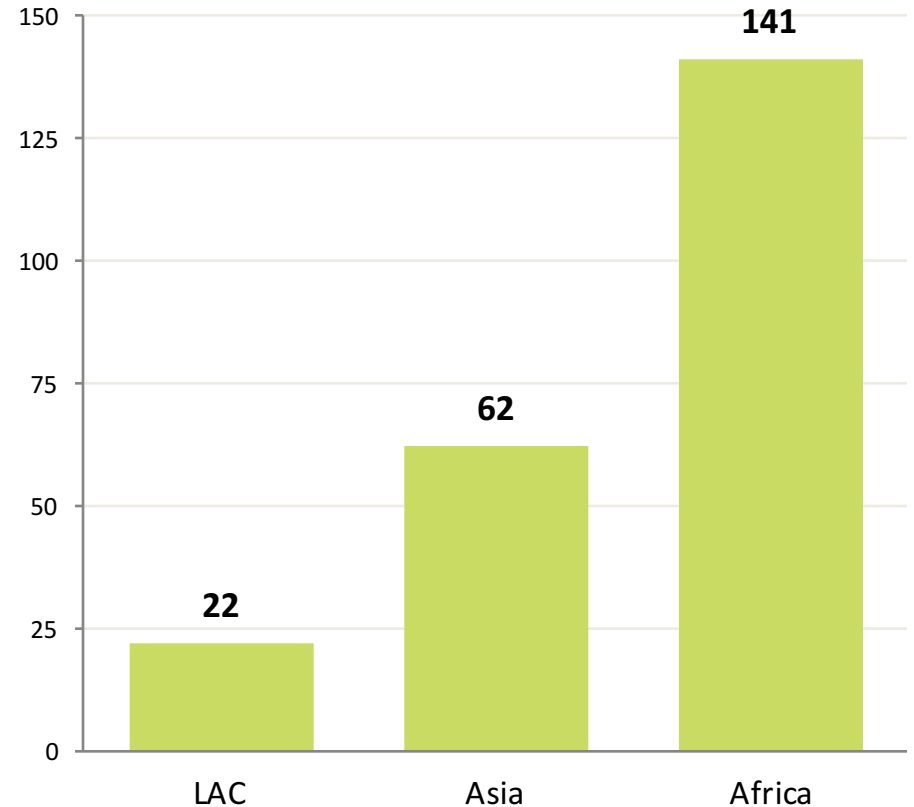


# Women are still at risk of dying from an unsafe abortion

## Global trend

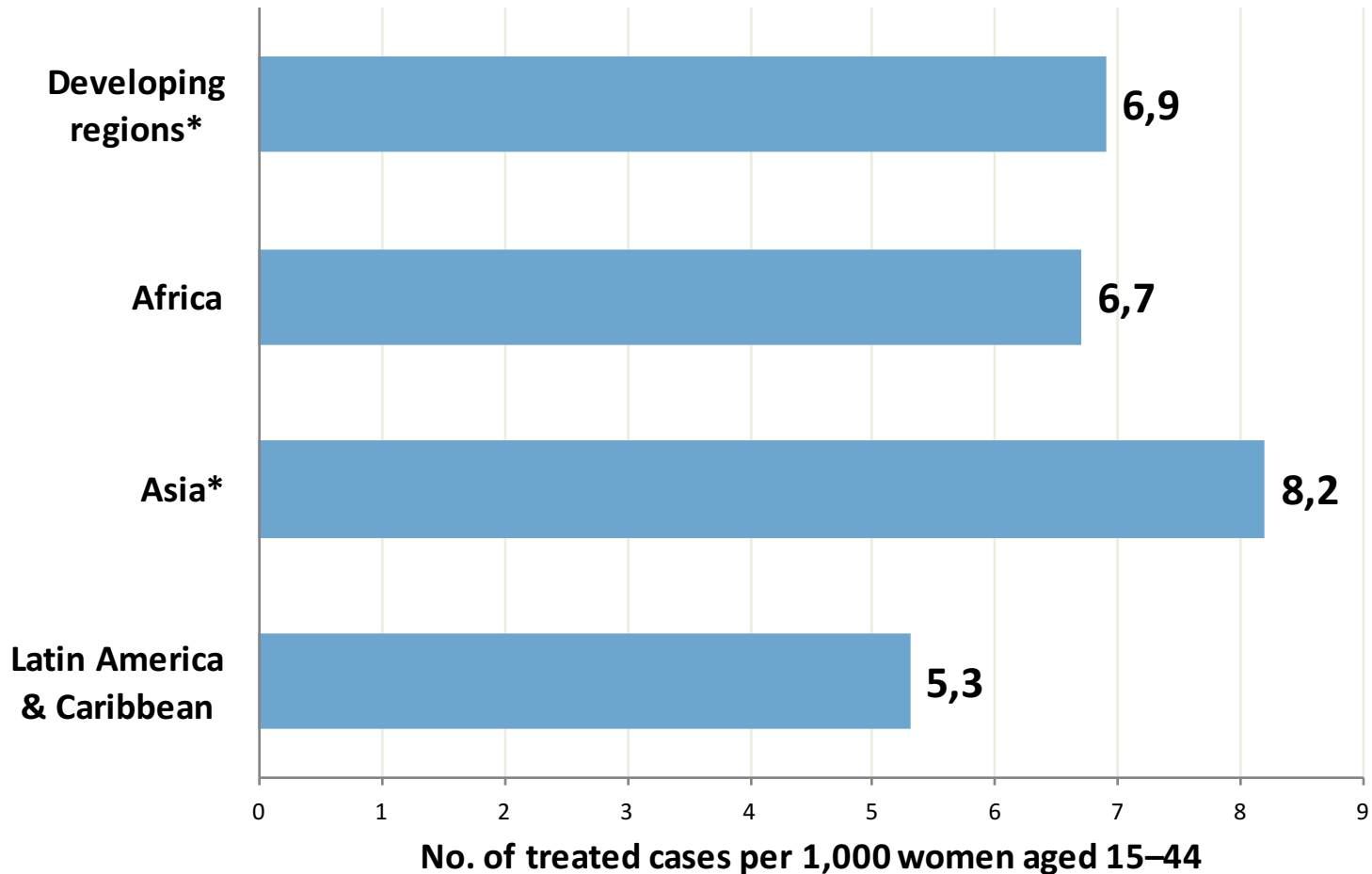


## Current levels

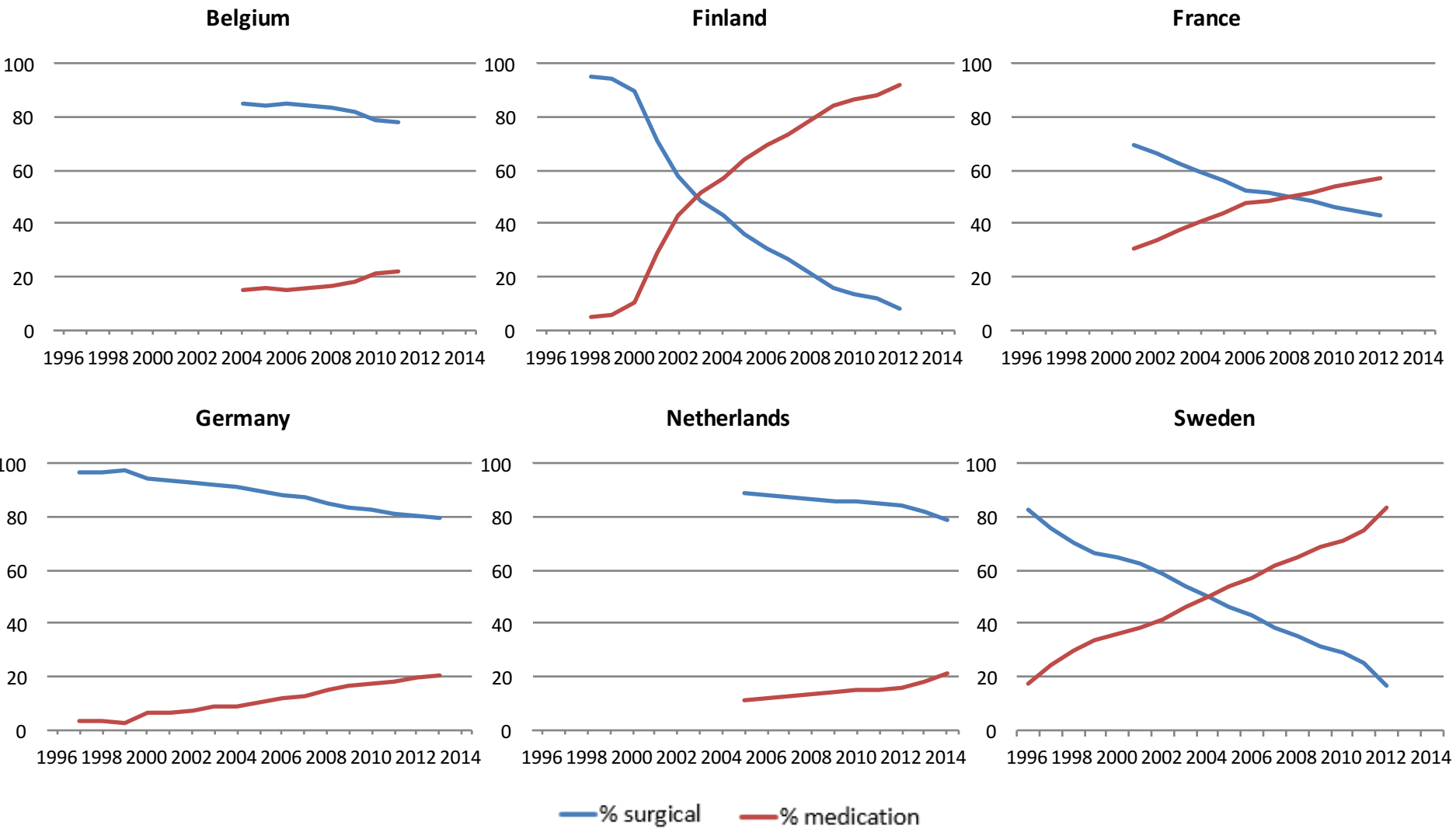


Number of deaths for every 100,000 abortions

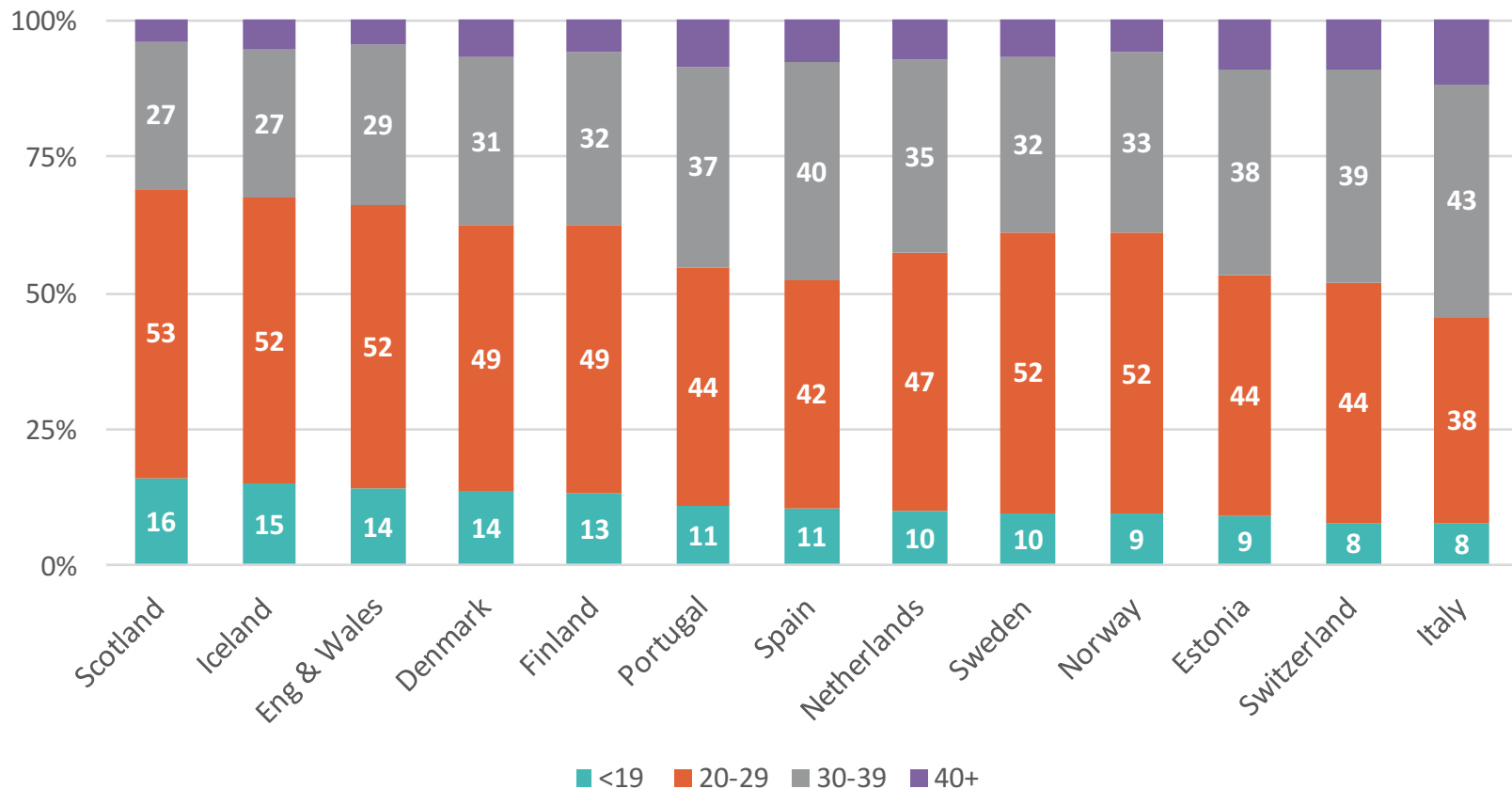
## Almost seven women per 1,000 in developing regions are treated annually for complications of induced abortion



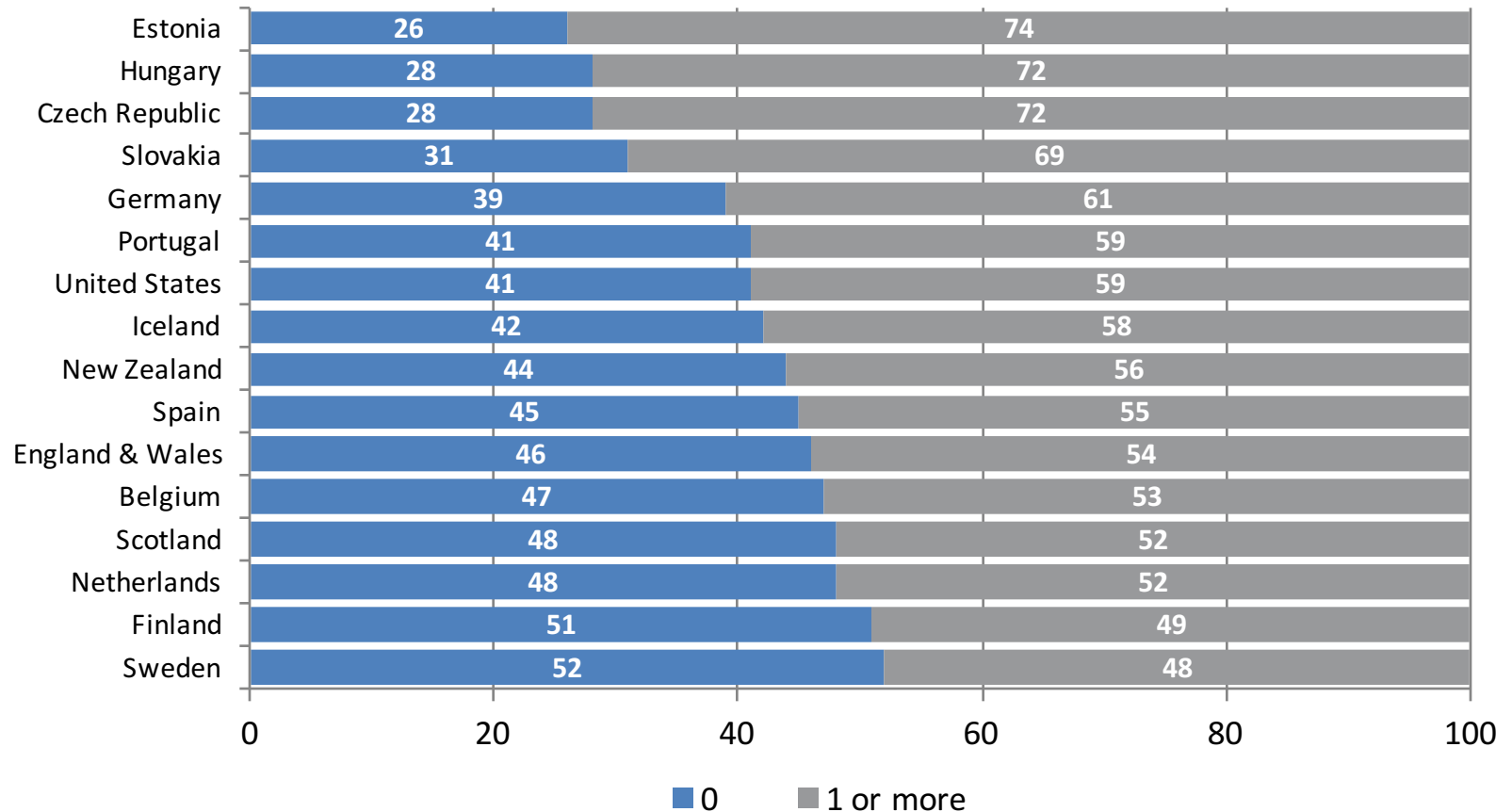
# Surgical and drug-induced abortion are both used in Europe



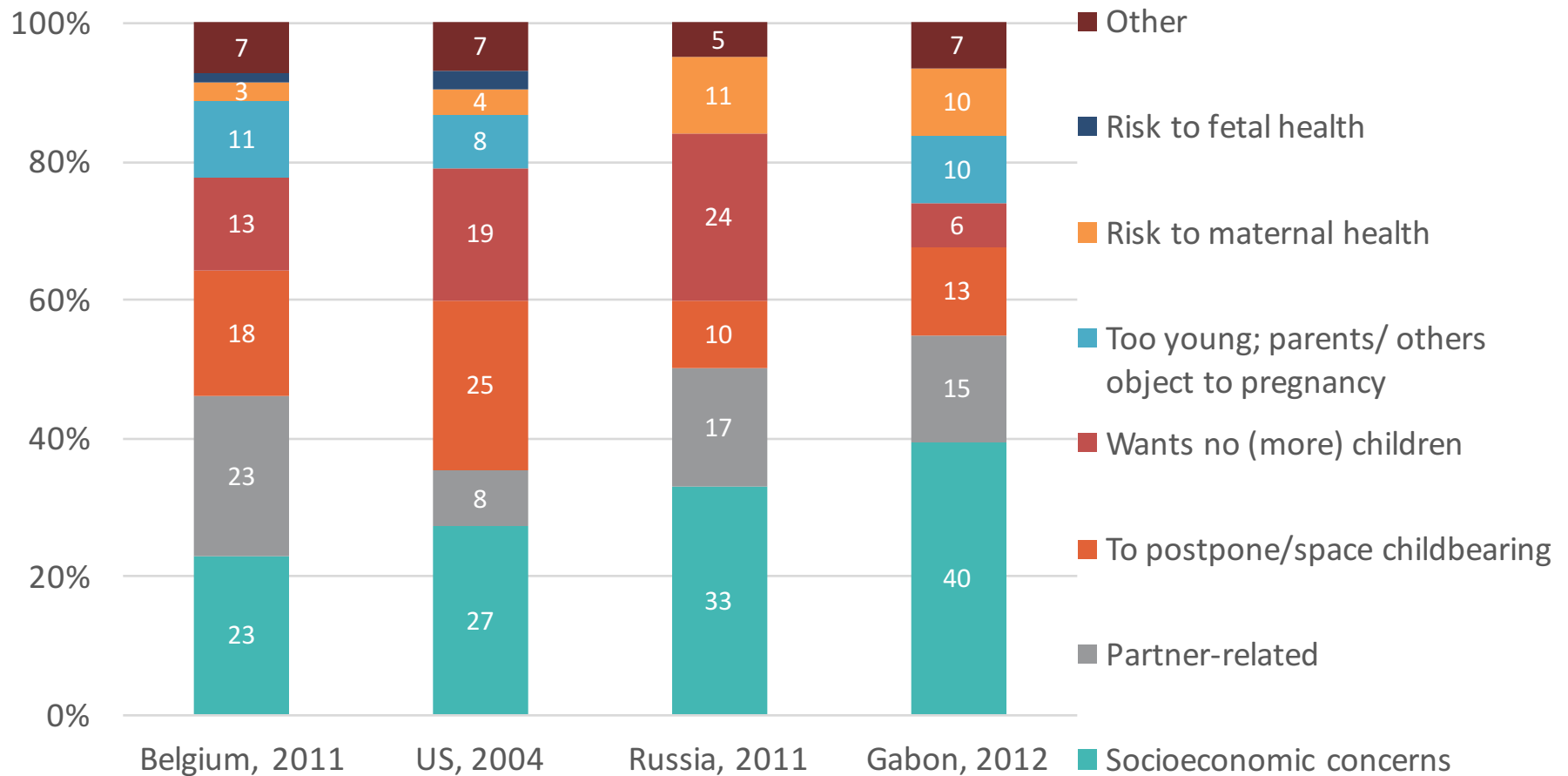
# Most women obtaining abortions are 20-39 years old



# Most women who have had an abortion have at least one child



# Women report a variety of reasons for obtaining an abortion



## Summary

- Unintended pregnancy rates have declined across the world, while abortion rates have held steady in the developing world
- Though many countries have broadened the grounds for legal abortion, almost half of women still live under restrictive laws
- Half of abortions are performed under unsafe conditions each year
- It appears that unsafe abortions are being done under less dangerous circumstances now in some countries
- Substantial inequities exist in the incidence of unintended pregnancy and access to safe abortion and postabortion care



## Recommendations

- Ensure that women have access to high quality contraceptive services
- Expand the grounds for legal abortion
- Implement policies that expand access to abortion services and post-abortion care
- Reduce the harm done by unsafe abortions in low-resource settings

**Thank you**  
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