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## European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology

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### The impact of a liberalisation law on legally induced abortion hospitalisations



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# INTRODUCTION

➤ **Legal abortion** based purely in maternal option **without fetal/maternal pathology** was liberalised in Portugal in 2007

➤ Since then abortion rates ↑

*Diário da República, 1.ª série — N.º 75 — 17 de Abril de 2007*

## ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

**Lei n.º 16/2007**

de 17 de Abril

**Exclusão da ilicitude nos casos de interrupção voluntária da gravidez**

A Assembleia da República decreta, nos termos da alínea c) do artigo 161.º da Constituição, o seguinte:

Artigo 1.º

Alteração do Código Penal

O artigo 142.º do Código Penal, com a redacção que lhe foi introduzida pelo Decreto-Lei n.º 48/95, de 15 de Março, e pela Lei n.º 90/97, de 30 de Julho, passa a ter a seguinte redacção:

«Artigo 142.º

[...]

1 — Não é punível a interrupção da gravidez efectuada por médico, ou sob a sua direcção, em estabelecimento de saúde oficial ou oficialmente reconhecido e com o consentimento da mulher grávida, quando:

a) .....

b) .....

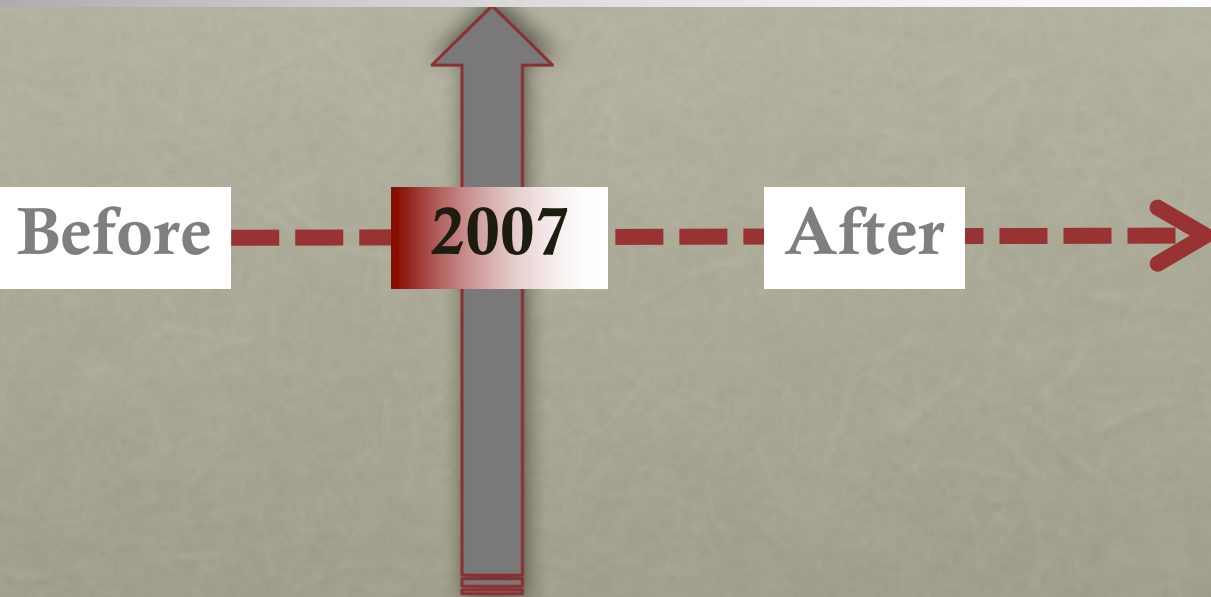
c) Houver seguros motivos para prever que o nascituro virá a sofrer, de forma incurável, de grave doença ou malformação congénita, e for realizada nas primeiras 24 semanas de gravidez, exceptuando-se as situações de fetos inviáveis, caso em que a interrupção poderá ser praticada a todo o tempo;

d) .....

e) For realizada, por opção da mulher, nas primeiras 10 semanas de gravidez.

# OBJECTIVE

total legal induced abortion related hospitalisation trends



liberalisation of abortion by maternal request



# STUDY DESIGN

**Inclusion criteria:** hospitalisations of legal induced abortion (LIA)

*(ICD-9-CM codes 635.x)*

**Time period:** 2000 → 2014

**Source:** Portuguese databases:

- **ACSS** (*Central Administration of the Health System*) → all data public hospitalisations in mainland Portugal
- **INE** (*National Statistics Institute*) → total performed LIA in mainland Portugal
- **DGS** (*General Direction of Health*) → LIA data in mainland Portugal

**Parameters analyzed:**

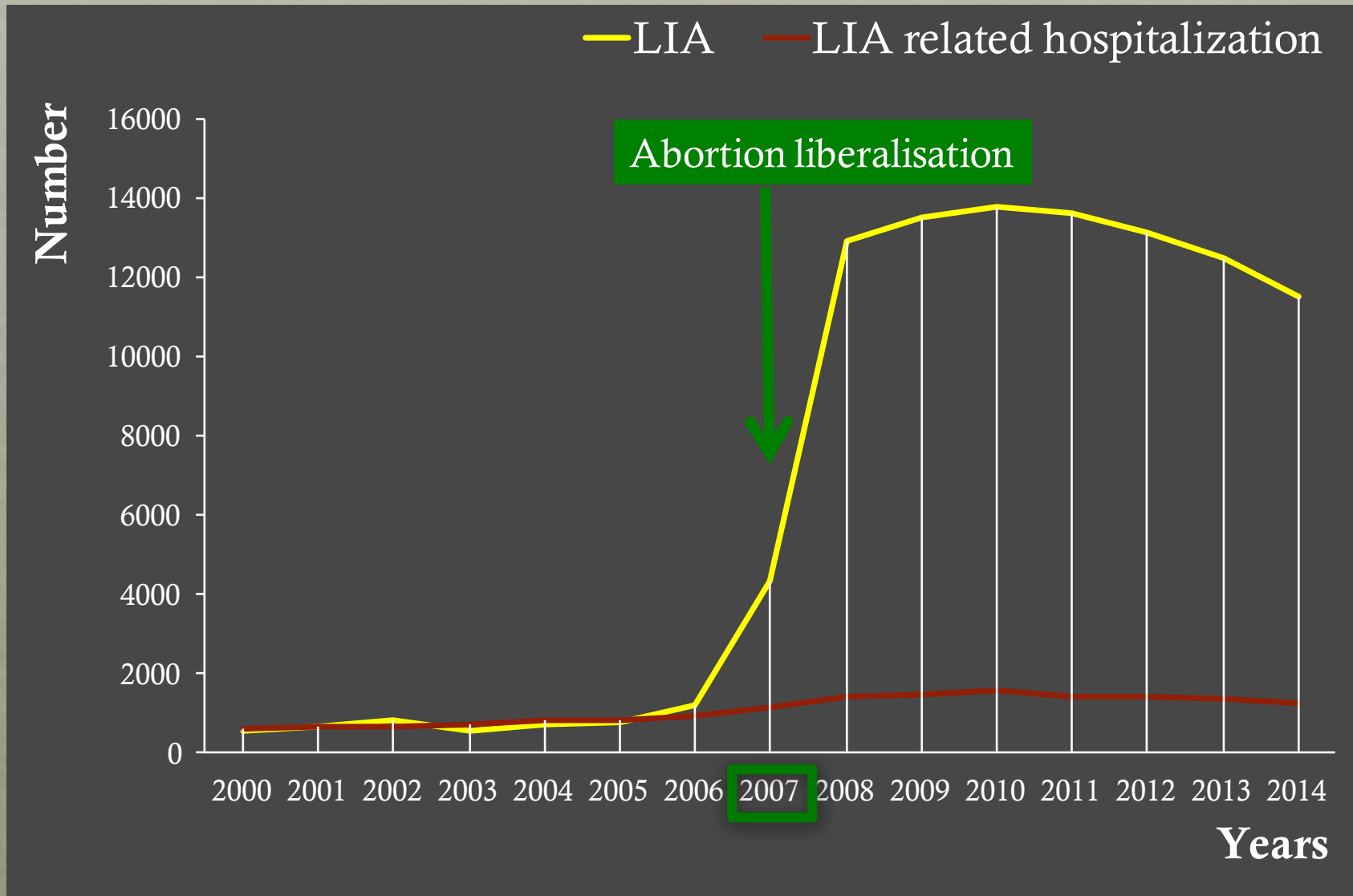
- hospitalisations *per* abortion =  $N^{\circ}$  LIA hospitalisations /  $N^{\circ}$  LIA
- mean age
- $N^{\circ}$  hospitalisations *per* age group
- complications
- admission type: *elective versus emergent*
- length of stay

## **Statistics methods:**

- Descriptive statistics: IBM SPSS Statistics 22™
- *Mann-Whitney* tests
- Independent sample t-tests
- *Chi-square* tests
- Linear regressions models 95% CI

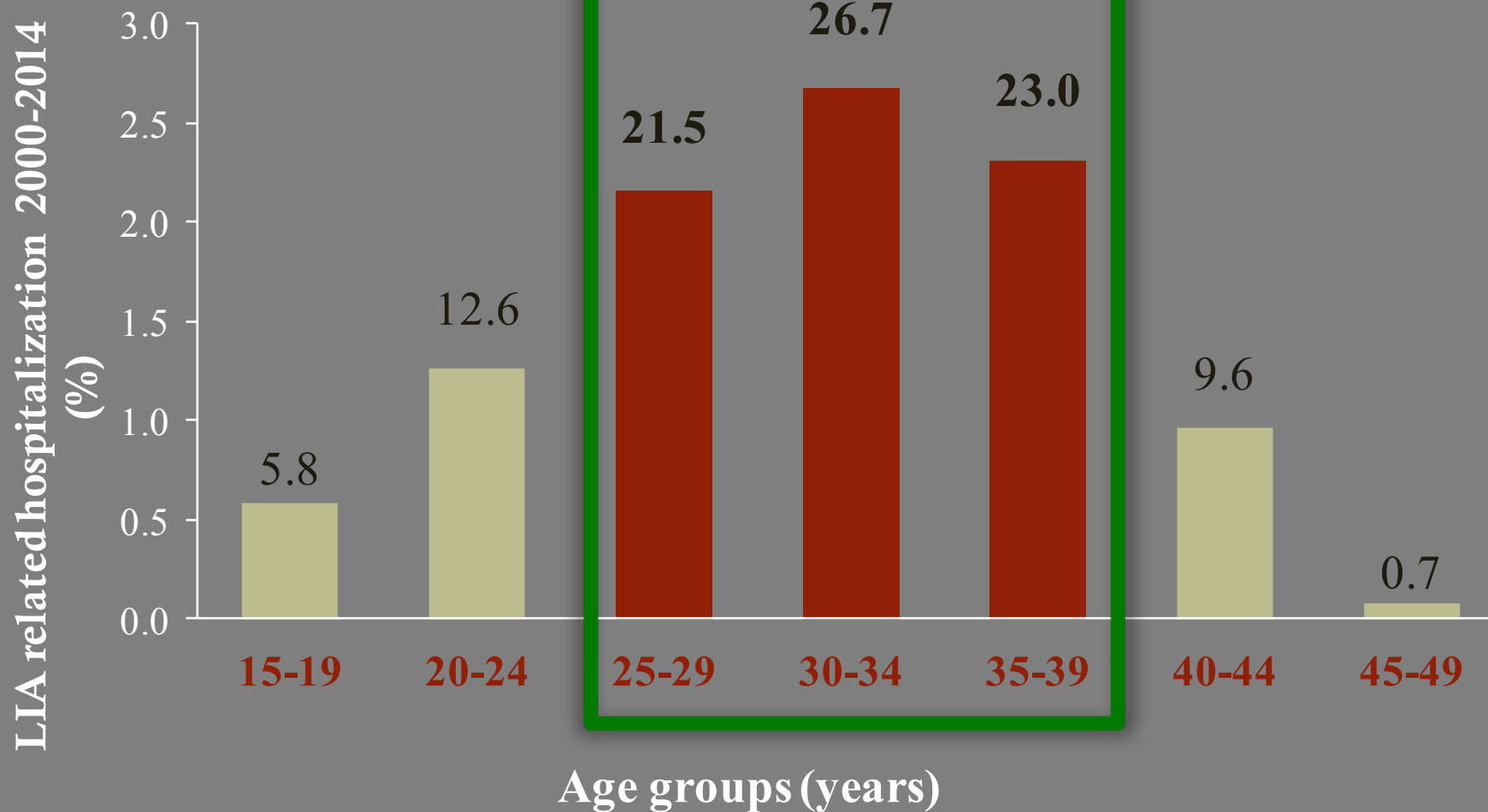
# RESULTS:

## FREQUENCY OF LEGALLY INDUCED ABORTIONS (LIA) AND LIA HOSPITALIZATIONS IN PORTUGAL



## RESULTS:

LIA RELATED HOSPITALIZATION (%) *PER* EACH AGE GROUP IN PORTUGAL



# RESULTS:

## HOSPITALIZATIONS *PER* ABORTION IN PORTUGAL

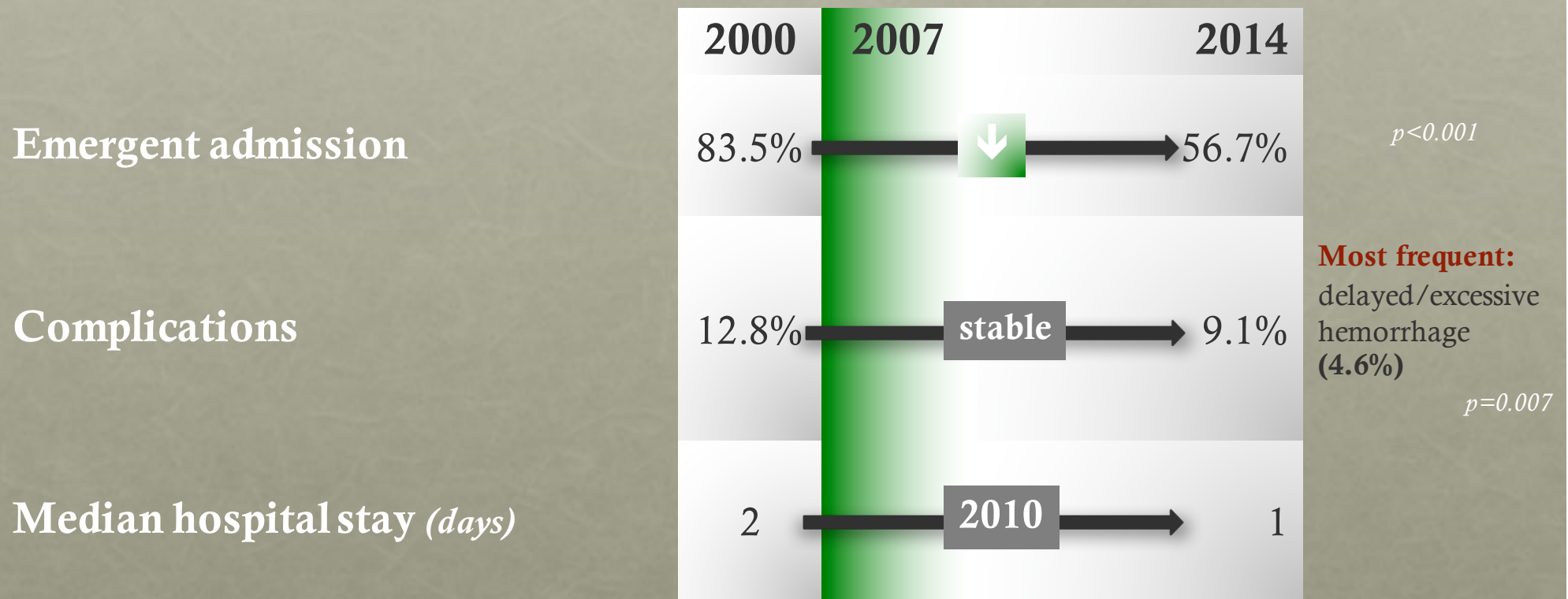
Year	LIA (n)	LIA related hospitalizations (n)	Emergent Admission (%)	Without complications (%)	Hospitalizations <i>per</i> abortion (Hospitalizations/LIA)	Hospitalization stay - Median length (days)
2000	575	618	83.5	87.2	1.07	2
2001	659	657	85.1	83.1	1.00	2
2002	811	680	76.9	86.6	0.84	2
2003	547	742	76.1	87.2	1.36	2
2004	695	809	76.0	86.2	1.16	2
2005	783	839	67.1	85.6	1.07	2
2006	1,195	902	65.6	89.6	0.75	2
<b>2007</b>	<b>4,323</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>2</b>
2008	12,919	1,423	60.2	83.9	0.11	2
2009	13,504	1,455	58.6	84.5	0.11	2
2010	13,780	1,603	59.2	88.0	0.12	1
2011	13,604	1,443	53.9	86.5	0.11	1
2012	13,149	1,419	54.2	87.0	0.11	1
2013	12,489	1,345	57.9	91.0	0.11	1
2014	11,512	1,259	56.7	90.9	0.11	1

# RESULTS





# RESULTS



# CONCLUSIONS

Since the liberalisation:

- ✓ LA ↑ 15x
- ✓ Hospitalisations not even doubled
- ✓ **Hospitalisations/abortion** ↓ → major impact of LIA by maternal request liberalisation on abortion trends nationwide.

**Before the liberalisation: 1 LA → 1 hospitalisation**

**After the liberalisation: 10% of LA → 1 hospitalisation**

# CONCLUSIONS

**LA hospitalisations** occur more within LA due to maternal/fetal pathology



**LA for maternal/fetal indications:**

↑ Maternal comorbidities  
occur at ↑ gestational ages



↑ complications  
↑ hospital lengths

**LIA hospitalisations** are more frequent at 25-39 years, an older age group, when compared to the one registered in all cases of LA, reflecting the **differences between those hospitalised and those who are not.**

# CONCLUSIONS

## Limitations:

- Possible under registration of LIAs (namely by pure maternal option) by INE;
- An overlapping of cases recorded in this database may be present as the same LIA, in some extreme conditions, may lead to more than one registered episode (hospitalization);
- Our database did not differentiate neither LIAs performed by maternal request versus for maternal/fetal indications.

## Strengths:

**First study to access data about LIA-related hospitalizations in Portugal before and after the passing of the law.**





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