



Women's experiences of home abortion - a radical change in empowerment

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Study aim

To gain knowledge about women's experiences, views and reactions regarding having a home abortion (medical abortion with the use of misoprostol at home)

Subjects and method

100 women who had chosen home abortion

Experiences of previous pregnancies (90/100)

Interview one week post-abortion

A semi-structured interview guide - quantitative and qualitative data

Social background

n=100

<i>Median /mean (years)</i>	<i>32/33</i>
<i>Married/cohabiting</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Partner relationship/not cohabiting</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Single</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Children</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Employed</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>On parental leave/student</i>	<i>15/11</i>
<i>Unemployed/others</i>	<i>10</i>

Taking the pill at clinic (day 1) - a crucial moment

- ***Only positive feelings (45/77)*** "...a relief to get started..." ,
"... a major decision and I felt it was okay when I took the pill..."
"...an irrevocable act..." , "...an act with no return..."
- ***Mixed feelings (23/77)*** "... both hard and sad but also good to start the process..." ,
"...this was the hardest part...when you do the deed...it was harder than the day of expulsion..."
- ***Only painful feelings (9/77)*** "...actively kills the embryo...now it is the end, the moment of dying...I was sad..." , "...harder than the day of expulsion..."

Working and/or waiting for expulsion (day 2)

Ordinary daily activities - no special thoughts or feelings

”... worked as usually...”, “...thought sometimes that I was going to have an abortion...a strange feeling but not scary...”

An interminable wait for expulsion to occur

“...counted the minutes until the whole thing would be over...the mere thought that I was pregnant was hard...”

Relief - the main feeling during expulsion day

- ***Calm, goal oriented (68/100)*** “... looked upon it as a job that had to be done...”, “felt relief and release...good it was over...”
- ***Mixed feelings (15/100)*** “...one felt sad but the decision felt right...”
- ***Only painful feelings (9/100) - sadness, loneliness, anger and self-blame*** “...had to do it because the circumstances were not good...”
- ***Partner (75/100) or other person (16/100) present***

The products of conception (POCs)

Most women had looked at POCs (80/100)

“...looked at it to confirm that it had come out...”, “... I am curious and want to know what happens...”

Most women had not find it especially dramatic to see or handle the POCs.

Eight women (8/20) had not looked at the POCs due to feeling of discomfort or for fear of seeing the embryo

Satisfaction and wellbeing - one week post-abortion

Pleased with the decision and the method (98/100)

Suffered no emotional distress related to abortion (93/100)

Would recommend the method to other (96/100)

Experiences of having the home abortion:

As expected 48

Easier than expected 44

Harder than expected 8

‘Handling it on your own’ – privacy, control and empowerment

Privacy, greater autonomy

Comfort - own environment, bed and toilet etc.

Presence of a supporting partner/friend

Natural to opt the home abortion method

A relief to be spared from having the abortion at clinic

“...staying at clinic would have made me feel more sick...”,

“...a more dramatic act than it was at home...”

Conclusions

Given that the women choose this method themselves and are well informed, they are able to handle the abortion process by themselves at home.

The option to choose home abortion implies a radical change in empowerment for women.

Also allowing women the possibility to take mifepristone at home would increase their personal integrity and control even more.