

Induced abortion 1990 to 2014: Global, regional, and subregional trends

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WHY ESTIMATE ABORTION INCIDENCE?

- **To help monitor trends in abortion and unintended pregnancy**
- **To motivate investments in prevention of unintended pregnancy and unsafe abortion**
- **To estimate the number of unsafe abortions**
- **To help ensure an informed discourse on abortion**

Objectives

PRIMARY:

- To calculate subregional, regional and global levels and trends in abortion incidence in 1990 to 2014

SECONDARY:

- To calculate the proportion of pregnancies that end in abortion
- To examine whether abortion rates vary with the legal status of abortion

Key findings

ABORTION INCIDENCE IN 2010-2014:

- **56 million induced abortions occurred each year, on average**
- **There were 35 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44**
- **One in four pregnancies ended in abortion**
- **73% of abortions were obtained by married women**
- **The average abortion rate was similar in countries with restrictive and liberal abortion laws**

Key findings

ABORTION TRENDS SINCE 1990-1994:

- **The abortion rate**
 - fell in the developed world
 - did not change in the developing world
- **The percent of pregnancies ending in abortion**
 - decreased in the developed world
 - increased in the developing world

Methodology

Abortion estimation: past and present

BASIS OF PRIOR ABORTION ESTIMATES:

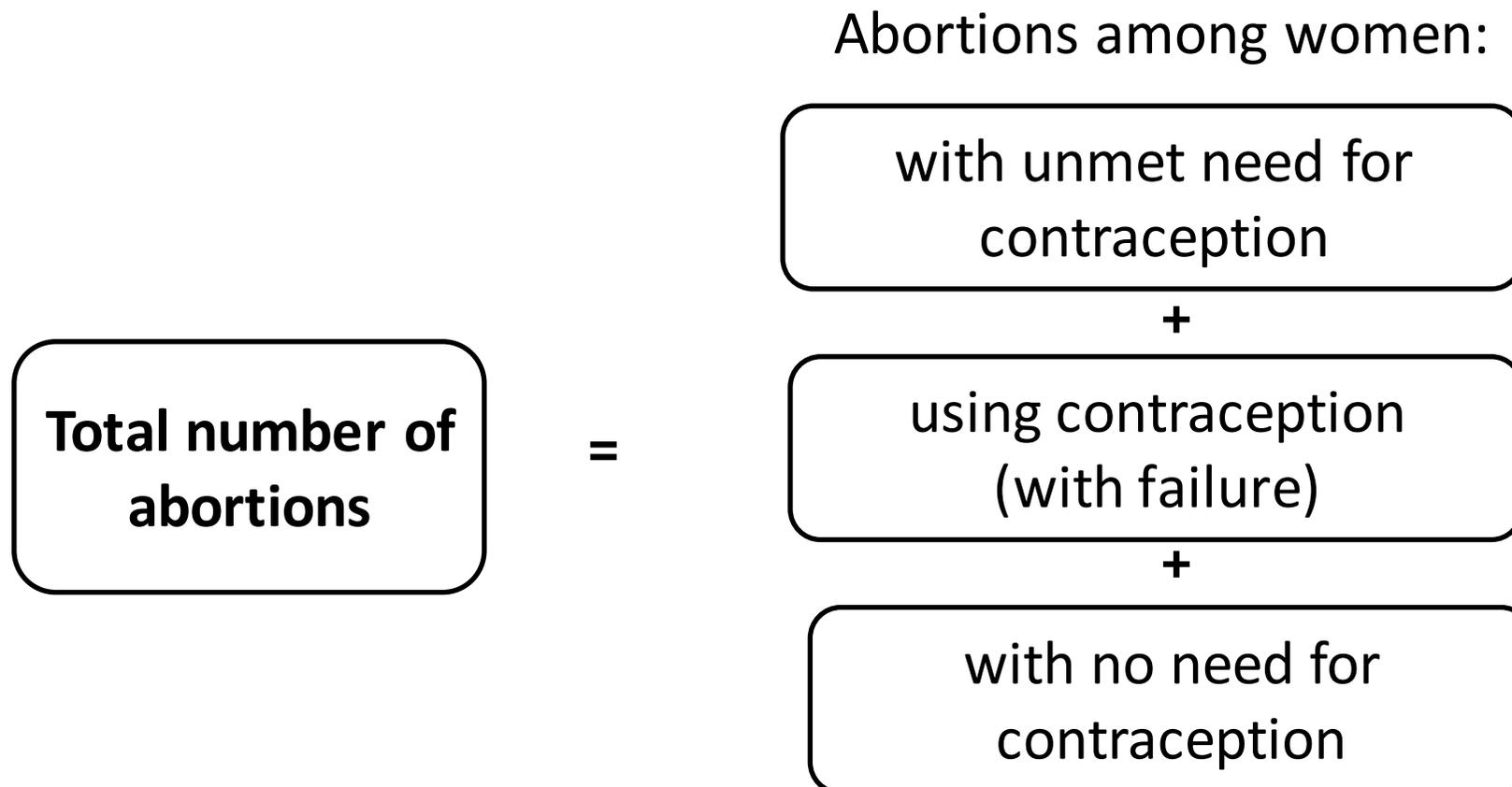
- **Available abortion data**
- **Informal inference to countries without data**

BASIS OF NEW ESTIMATES:

- **Available abortion data**
- **Data on factors associated with abortion incidence**
- **Hierarchical time series model**

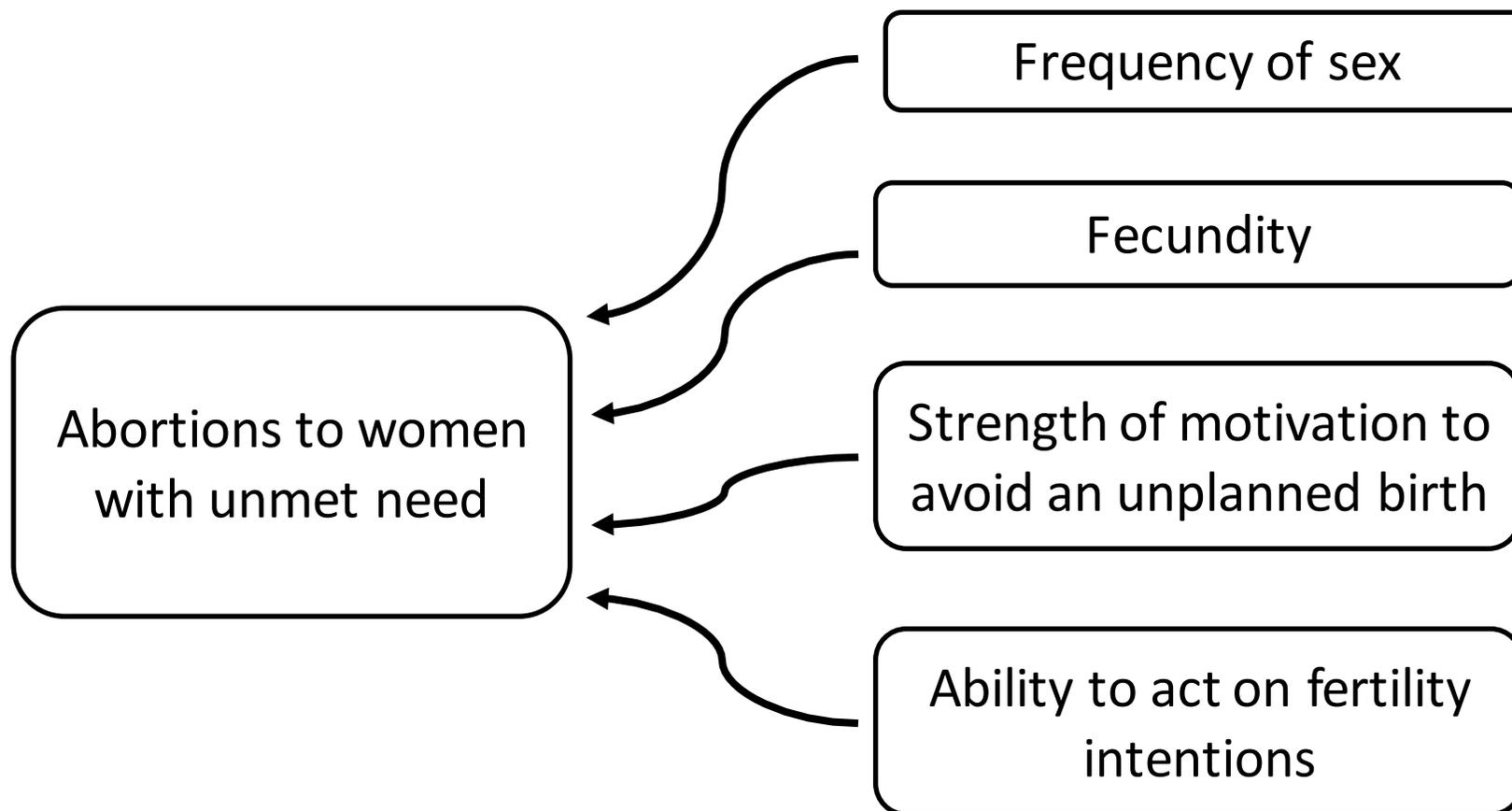
Conceptual Framework

Predictors of overall rates



Conceptual Framework

Predictors of subgroup rates

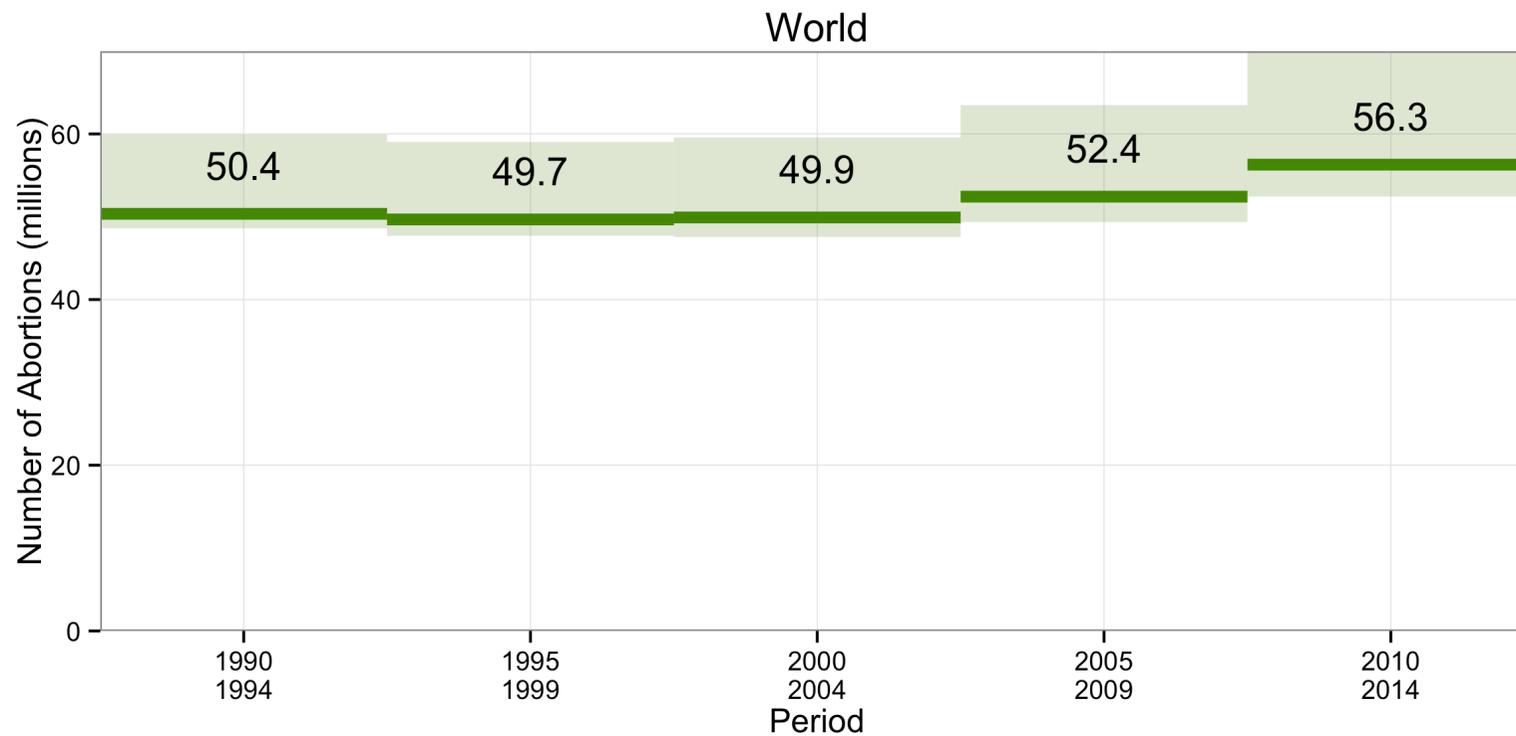


Percent of women 15-44 represented by at least one observation on abortion incidence

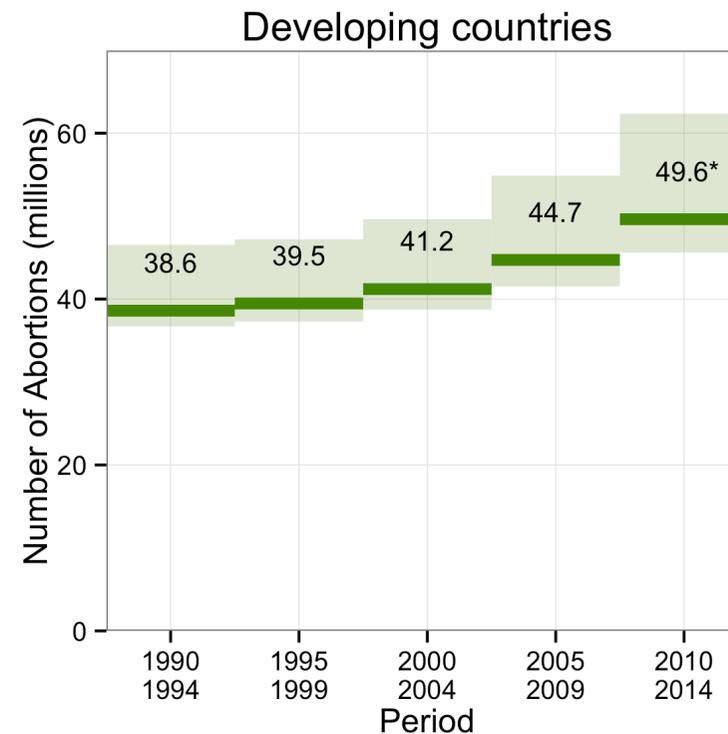
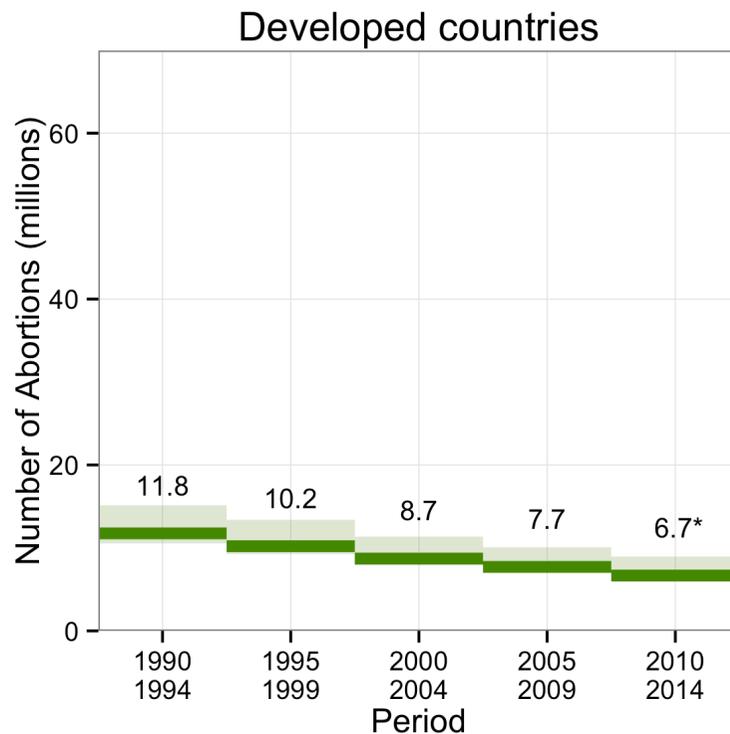
	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	1990-2014
World	69%	68%	67%	63%	47%	83%
Africa	1	31	10	21	41	57
Asia	75	76	80	70	45	84
LAC	69	5	19	33	3	85
N America	100	100	100	100	100	100
Europe	84	96	89	91	88	98
Oceania	79	77	75	74	12	75

Findings

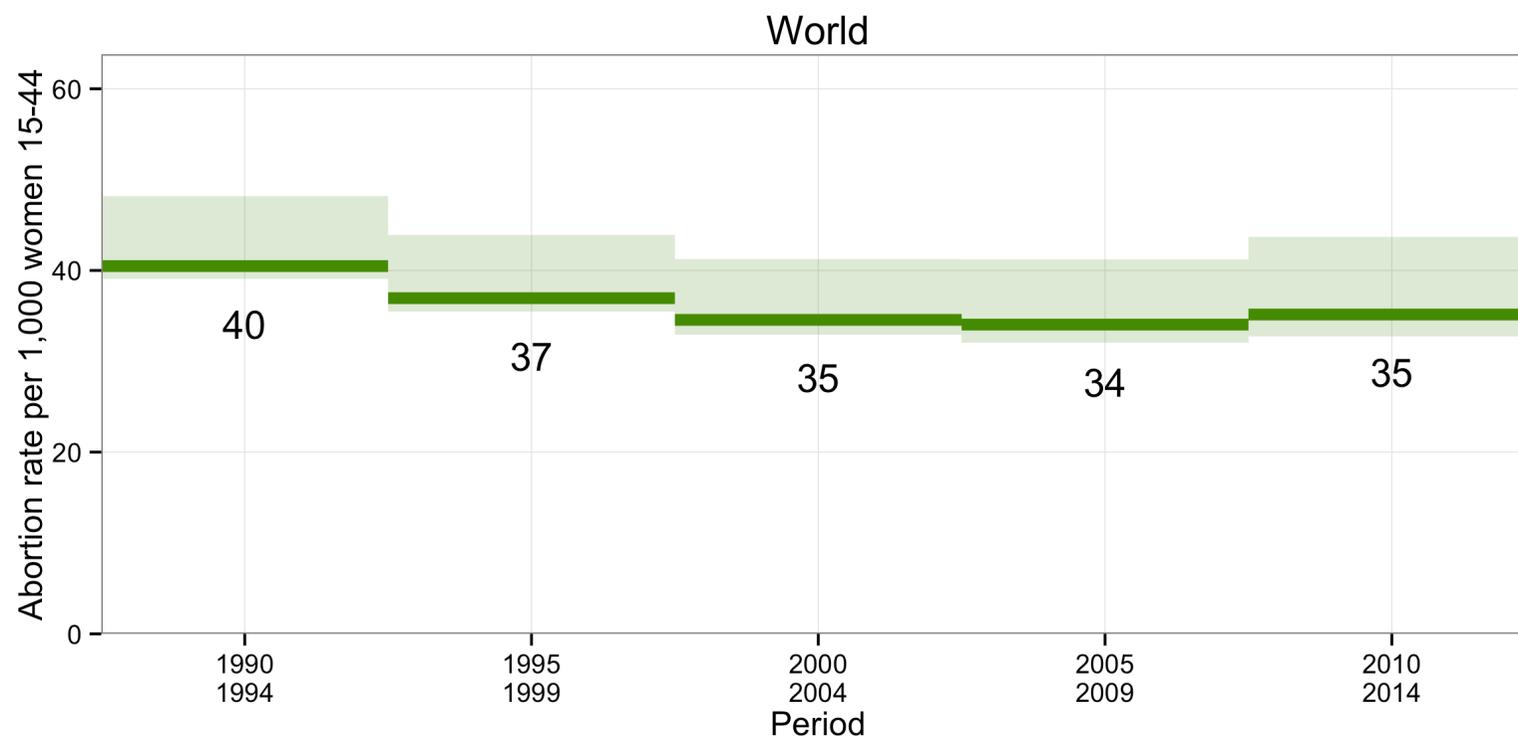
About 56 million abortions took place each year in 2010-2014



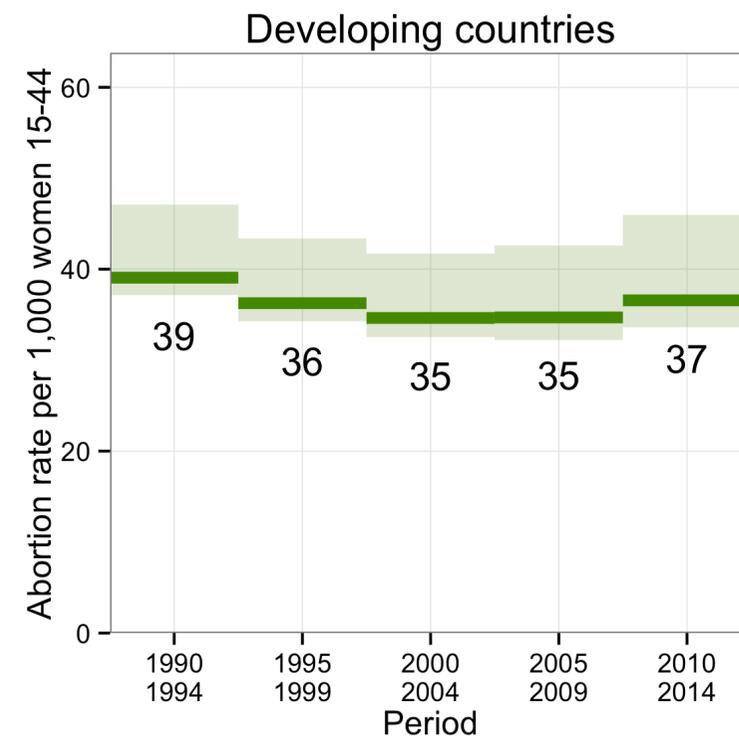
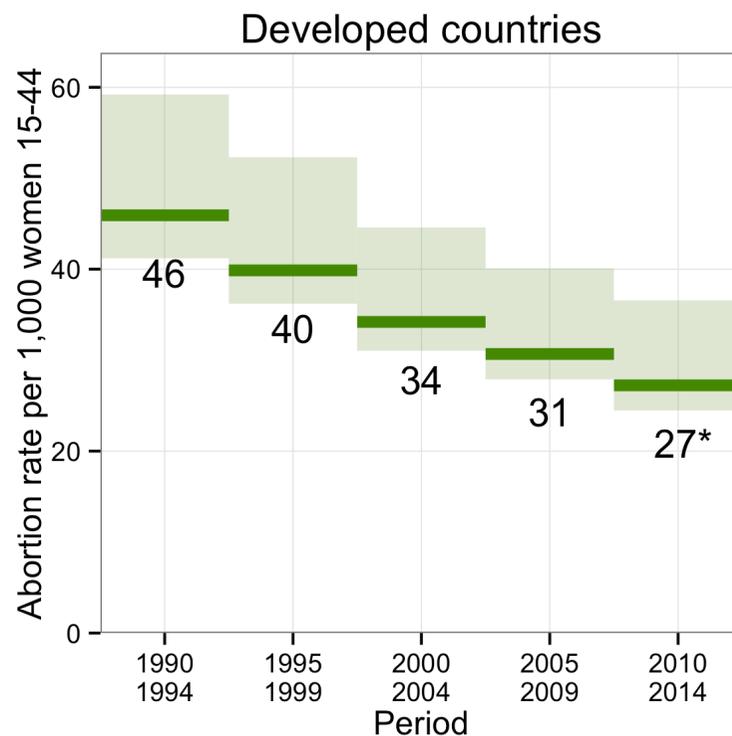
The annual number of abortions increased in developing regions



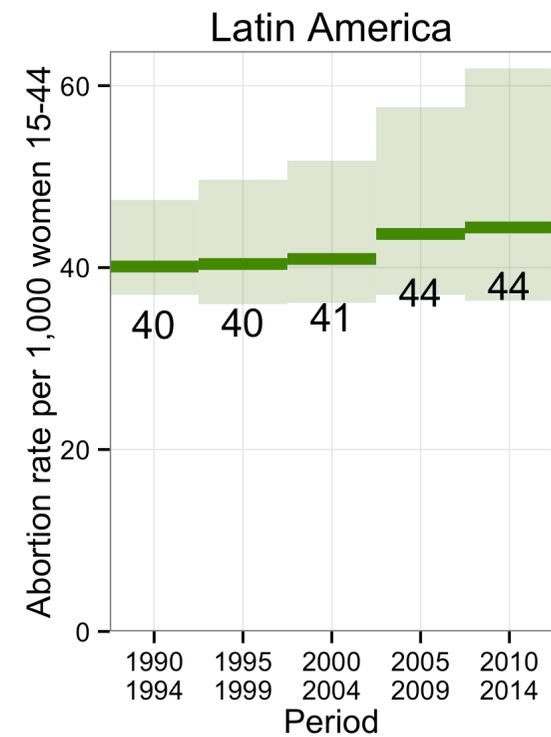
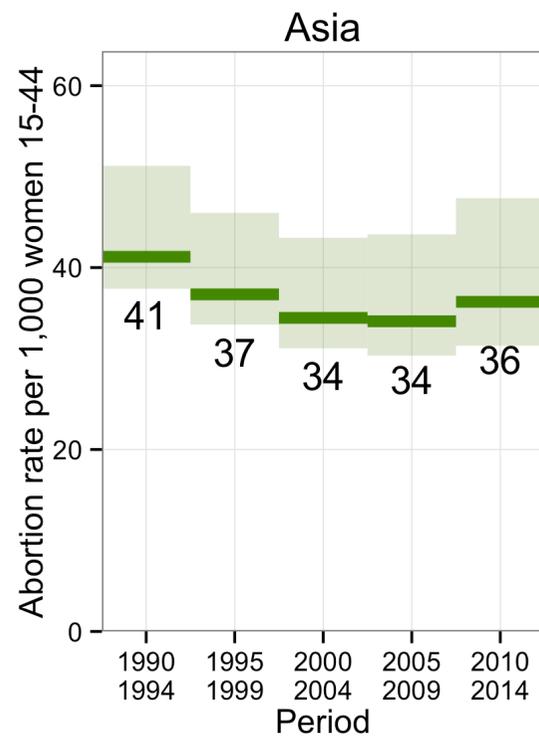
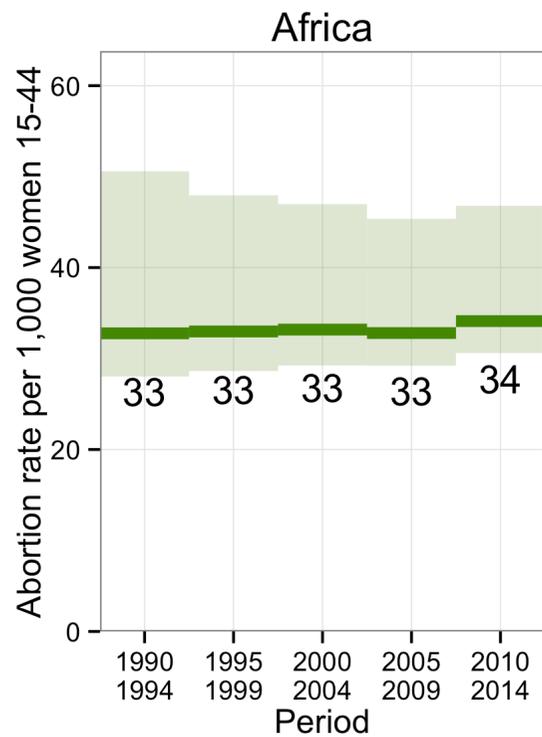
The global abortion rate fell slightly

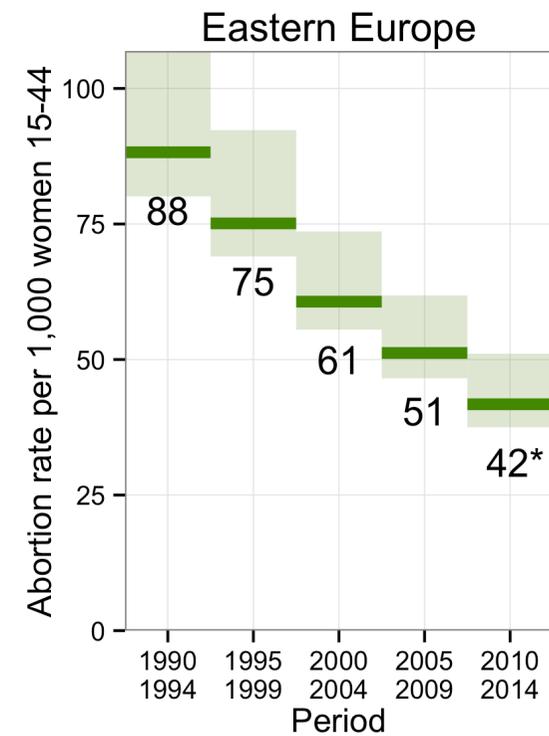
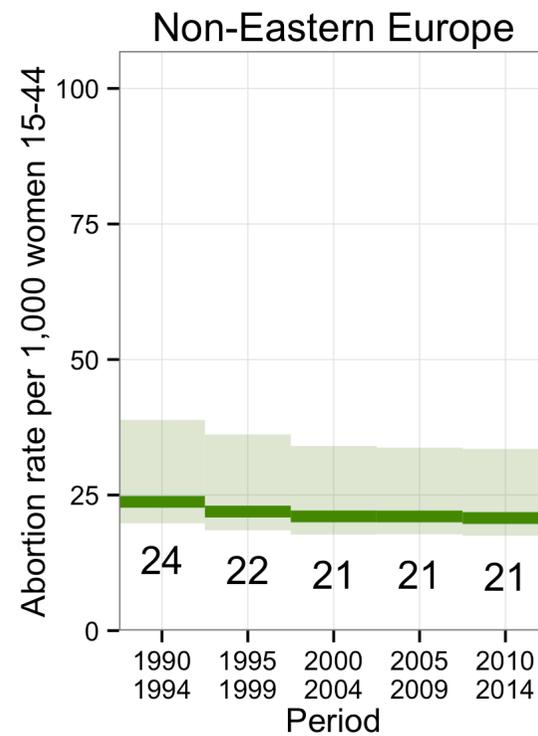
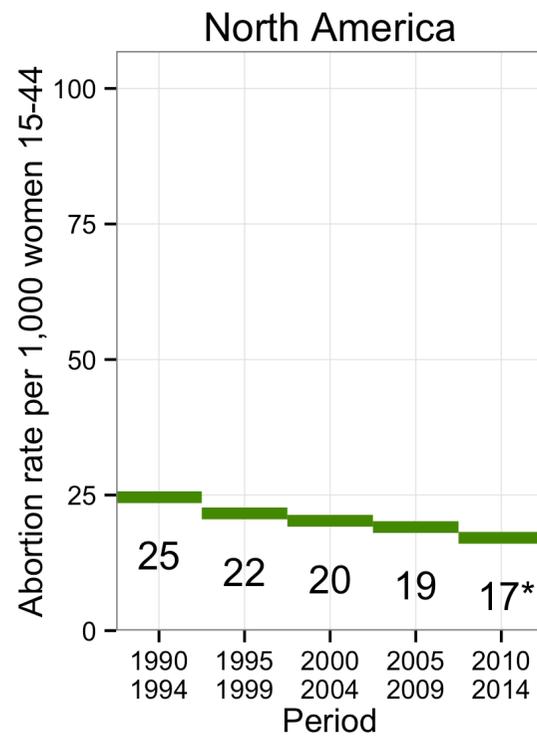


The abortion rate fell significantly in the developed world, but not in the developing world

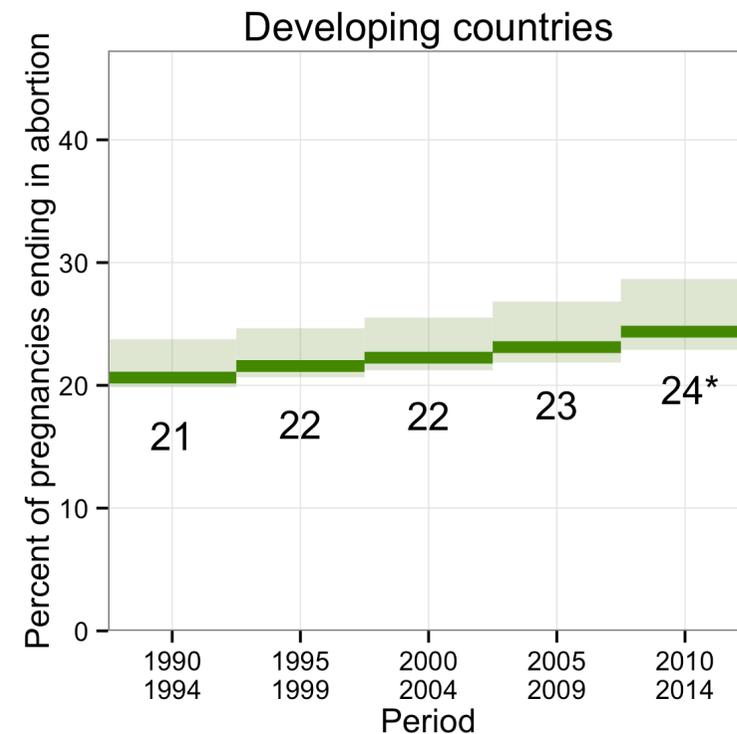
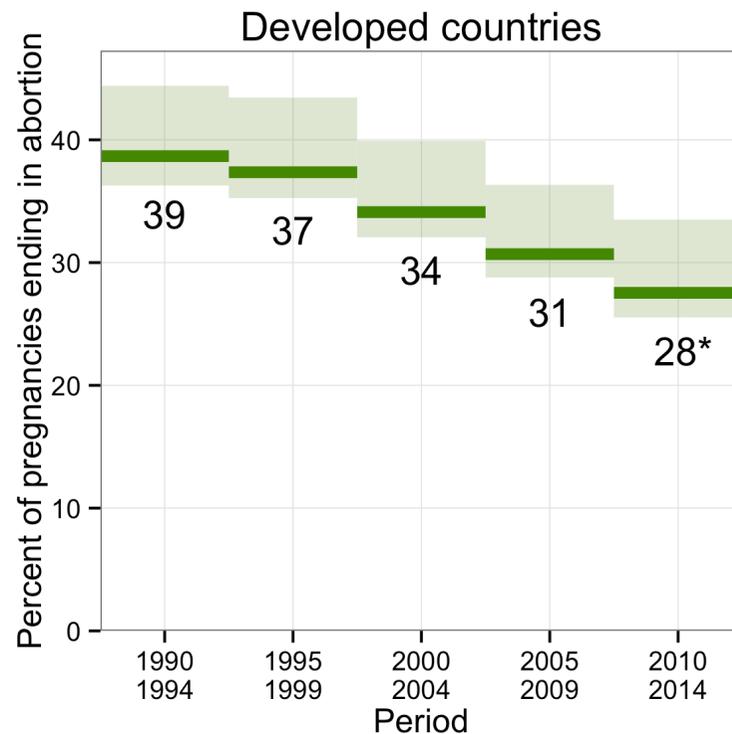


This is reflected in the regional trends

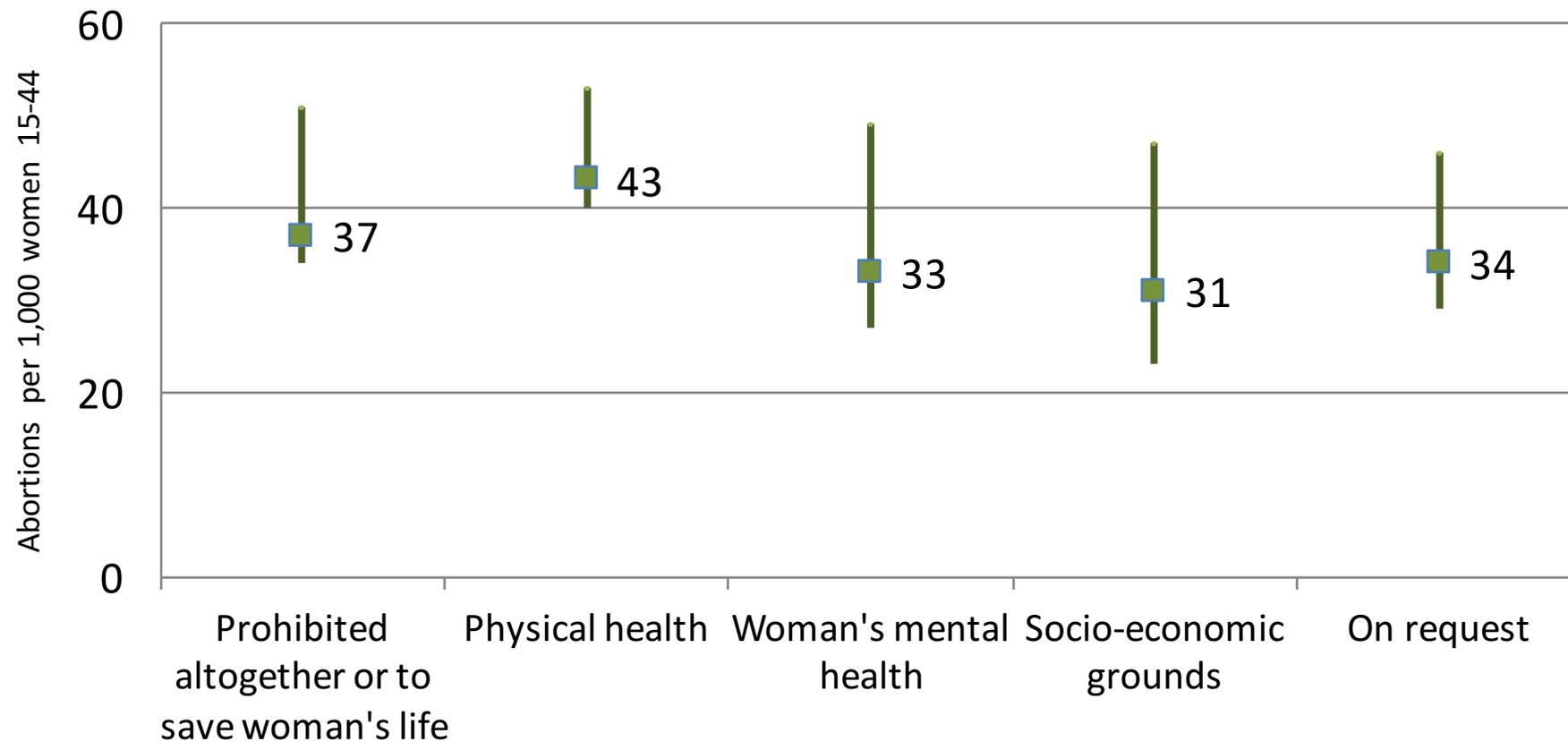




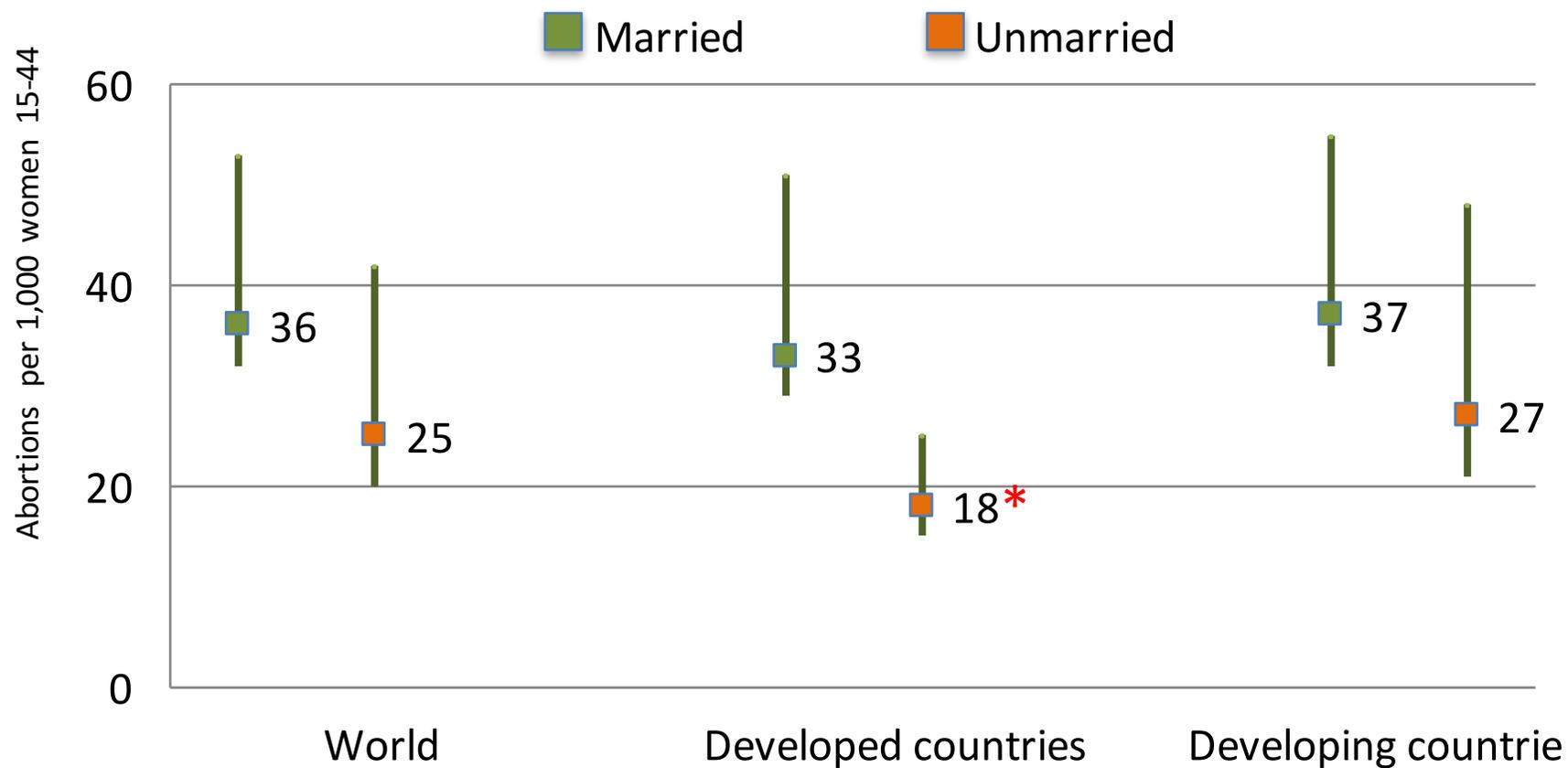
The percent of pregnancies ending in abortion is increasing in the developing world



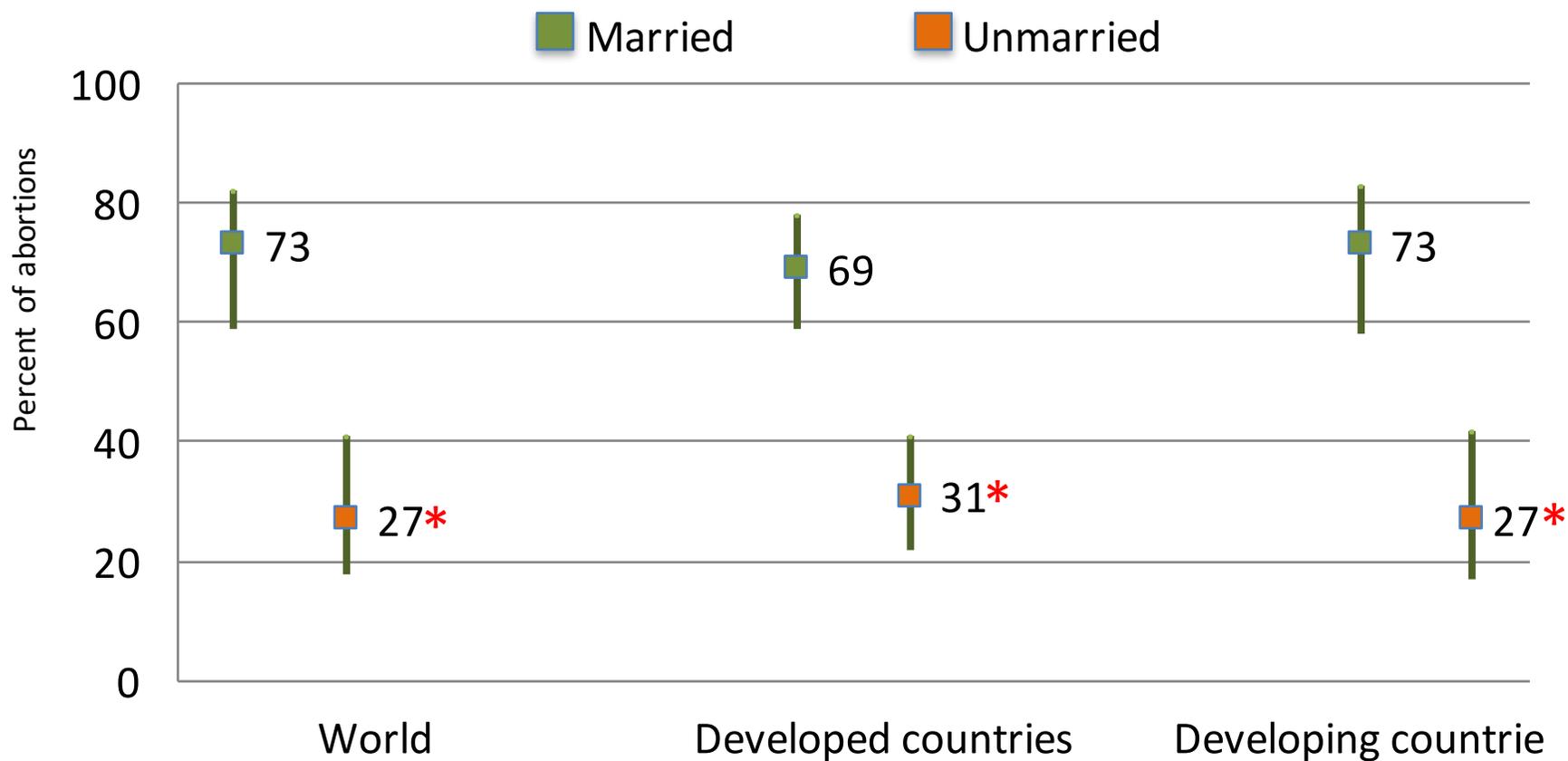
The abortion rate is similar in countries grouped by legal status



The abortion rate is higher among married women than unmarried women



Married women account for the majority of abortions



ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- **The decline in abortion in the developed world occurred mostly among married women**
- **The abortion rate has increased in Western Europe**
- **Prior global abortion estimates were conservatively low**

Discussion and Recommendations

DISCUSSION: UNSAFE ABORTION

- **Many women in developing countries with restrictive abortion laws have medically unsafe abortions**
- **6.9 million women in developing countries are treated for complications from unsafe abortion each year**
 - 1 out of every 5 abortions in the developing world leads to a treated complication
- **At least 22,000 women died of complications from unsafe abortion in 2014**

DISCUSSION: UNSAFE ABORTION

- **Factors to consider when assessing the safety of an abortion**
 - Is it performed in accordance with medical guidelines
 - Does the woman risk facing criminal sanctions
 - Is the woman at risk of stigma or social isolation

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- **We have better estimates than ever!**
- **Abortion rates have continued to decline in all subregions of the developed world**
- **Even where abortion laws are restrictive, many women who need an abortion are able to obtain it (*but not necessarily safely*).**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Address barriers to contraceptive use in developing countries**
 - Improve the *quality* of family planning services
- **Ensure women have access to safe abortion care**
 - Abortion is prevalent throughout the world
- **Ensure access to post-abortion care**
 - Millions of women experience complications from unsafe abortions

UK Government
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special
Programme of Research, Development and Research
Training in Human Reproduction

DISCUSSION: UNMET NEED FOR CONTRACEPTION

- **225 million women in the developing world want to avoid getting pregnant but are not using a modern method of contraception**

- **Women's reasons for not using a method include:**
 - Concerns about side effects and health risks of methods
 - Thinking they can avoid pregnancy without a method
 - Stigma related to not being married