

Induced Abortion Summary

Background

Induced abortions must be reported to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) by the physician who performed the abortion, using the form “Confidential Abortion Reports” The report includes demographic and medical history information about the woman obtaining the abortion and information about the medical-procedure. These reports are used to produce statistical reports about abortions occurring in Ohio. The forms are confidential: no identifying information about women who obtain abortions is collected except the medical record number. Physicians providing post-abortion care for complications are required to file a “Post Abortion Care Report for Complications.” It is not possible to link these post-abortion reports to the “Confidential Abortion Reports.” Both types of reports contain information about complications and are used to create statistical reports about post-abortion complications. This report presents information derived from both “Confidential Abortion Reports” and “Post-Abortion Care Reports for Complications” for 2002 in Ohio.

Characteristics of Induced Abortions Reported in Ohio, 2002

A total of 35,830 induced pregnancy terminations were reported in Ohio for 2002, including 32,687 for Ohio residents (91.2 percent). The number of resident and total abortions performed in Ohio has remained fairly stable since 1994, although there were 4.0 percent fewer abortions reported in 2002 than in 2001 (n=37,464).

Approximately one-sixth of women who obtained abortions were under 20 years of age, with another third between the ages of 20-24 years of age. The age distribution of women obtaining abortions has remained fairly unchanged since 1994. Decreased numbers of abortions were noted for 2002 compared to 2001 for all age groups. Approximately 83 percent of women who obtained an abortion were unmarried. The marital status distribution has remained fairly constant since 1994. 57 percent of resident women who obtained abortions were white, 37 percent were African-American, and 6 percent were other races or unknown. 3percent of abortions were obtained by women of Hispanic origin. African-American women had an abortion rate per 1,000 women that was approximately four times as high as among white women.

Approximately 21 percent of women obtaining abortions in Ohio reported no prior pregnancies. More than half of all induced abortions involved pregnancies of nine weeks or less (55 percent), with approximately 85 percent involving pregnancies of 12 weeks or less. The proportion involving abortions of nine weeks or less increased from 42 percent in 1994, while the proportion between nine and 12 weeks declined from 41 percent to 30 percent. There were 929 abortions involving pregnancies of 20 or more weeks, a number that increased from 649 in 1994. All reported abortions were obtained in seven major metropolitan areas of Ohio.

There were changes between 2001 and 2002 in method of termination for induced abortions performed in Ohio. Suction curettage was the most frequent method of termination at 83 percent (decrease from 92 percent in 2000 and 86 percent in 2001). Dilation and evacuation was the next most common method (9 percent). The number of medical/non-surgical procedures again increased substantially to 2,265 procedures (6 percent, up from less than 1 percent in 2000 and 3 percent in 2001).

Reported post-abortion complications were rare, averaging approximately one per 1,000 procedures. Forty-seven complications were reported on the “Post-Abortion Care Report for Complications” and 24 were reported on the “Confidential Abortion Reports.” These numbers were down from 108 and 33 in 2001 in the respective reports. The most common type of abortion complications were incomplete abortion, hematometra and infection, which together accounted for 87 percent of all complications.

County of residence for women obtaining abortions is reported in tables 3, 4, 5a and 5b. In accordance with ODH data disclosure policies, some counties were removed from tables 5a and 5b. The removed counties had fewer than 25 female residents in the reported age/race categories.