

## WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF ELECTIVE ABORTION IN ALBANIA

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### **Abstract**

The research describes women's perceptions and thoughts regarding elective abortion for the purpose of filling the gap that exists in the Albanian reality regarding such a fragile issue. These perceptions and thoughts are interrelated to the social trends such as economic conditions, modernization, variable thoughts on premarital sex and their sexual behavior, the variable values regarding abortion and above all, the changing position of women in the society etc. Abortion context, reasons, the place where abortion is carried out namely a state or private clinic, married vs unmarried women, age, etc it seems that they have changed.

The study is based on the qualitative research where focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in rural and urban areas in Albania are included. Considering that the issue is tangible and provokes debate, this method is chosen and it enables the establishment of a trust relation between researchers and interviewers in order to provide trustworthy and profound information.

Group discussions and in-depth interviews found out that abortion is quite common in Albania. Abortion in general is acceptable if it is carried out due to health causes, fetal abnormalities, women's young age and rape. Married and unmarried women show perceptions, reasons and different consequences regarding abortion. The general thought among the married women is that abortion is quite acceptable. The financial conditions represent the main issue that urges women to opt for abortion (being unable to keep the baby). Other reasons which derived from the research are: the pregnancy immediately after the previous birth, not wanting to have another baby, preference for baby boys (gender selection) and grandmother complex (being pregnant and grandmother at the same time).

Among the unmarried women, abortions represent something that can no be mentioned. Although attitudes to premarital sex are changing especially in Tirane, the thoughts on women that get pregnant

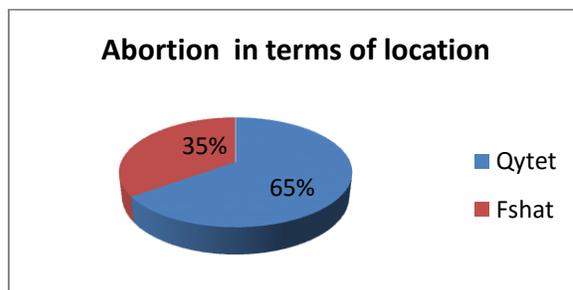
before marriage dhe the necessity for abortion still reflects the tradicional fundamental values (men should marry to virgins), where on the other side, men continue to adhere to the double moral that premarital sex must exist, but they should not be married to a woman that has experienced the process.

**Key concepts:** elective abortion, perception, abortion context, married vs unmarried women, private clinics vs state clinics.

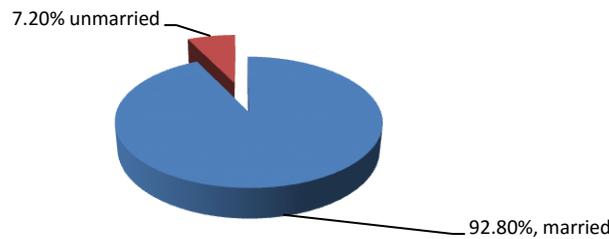
### The current situation

Before the 90s the termination of pregnancy was illegal. Abortion was considered a crime and women that carried out abortion were prejudiced by the society (Gjonça, 2009). In this period, most of abortions were illegally carried out and in unsafe conditions causing so death of many women who carried out abortion in the given conditions. In recent years, it is seen that abortion has become a urban rather than a rural phenomenon because till the end of the 90s, the number of the performed abortions by women who lived in village was higher than of those who lived in city whereas after 2000, this ratio has changed.

According to the data of INSTAT for 2012 it is indicated that the abortions performed by women who live in city make up 65,1% of the total number of abortions.

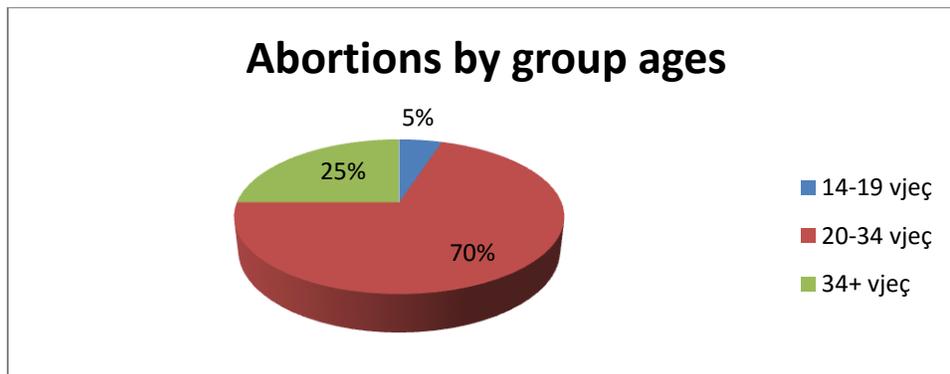


About 92.8 % of abortions are carried out by married women whereas the unmarried women seem that choose more to perform pregnancy termination in private clinics (about 7.2% of abortions are carried out by unmarried women) maybe because of keeping secrecy and convenience of the abortion procedures in the privat sector.



About 10 % of abortions are carried out in the private sector (the licenced private clinics for the pregnancy termination) whereas majority (about 90%) is carried out in the public sector.

The percentage of abortions in the adolescence is low, about 5 % of the total number of abortions. The comparison of abortions in terms of woman’s group age and her marital status, points out that in our country the majority of abortions (92.8%) are carried out by the married women versus 7.2 % that are carried out by the unmarried women. 70% of abortions are carried out by 20-34 age group (the most fertile age group), 25% of 34+ age group, 5 % from 14-19 age group. However the ratio of abortion is higher in 34+ age group where 2 to 5 pregnancies are abortions.



### Abortions by women’s employment and safety.

Compared to 2012, it was noticed that abortions are increasingly carried out by women that are not employed. For 2012 the abortions that are carried by unemployed women make up 83.1 % of total abortions versus 80.8%, the percentage of abortions carried out by the unemployed women in 2012. Among the cities with the highest number of abortions following Tirana (2908) is Fier with 434 abortions, Vlora 428 with abortions, Berat with 416 abortions and Durrës with 400 abortions. In the private sector, only 10% of abortions (291) are carried out which are reported by two licenced private clinics for pregnancy termination in Tirane ( Mary Stopes Clinic Albania) with 269 abortions and Health Clinic with

22 abortions). The low percentage is explained with the lack of a licence which expired between 2013 and later this licence was granted only to the private hospitals to provide women with a better service for abortion. Another method to have abortion (but absolutely unreported) is even the performing of abortion through tablets or differently known as ‘medicamental abortion’. This method is used mainly in the early stages of pregnancy respectively up to 49 days or 7 weeks after taking the two tabletes. In Albania, Misoprostoli is widely used, which although is not registered by National Center of Medicament Control, it can easily be found in pharmacy or in private clinics. From unofficial data and from the study is reported that a majority part of women that want to terminate pregnancy by their will uncontrollably and without any kind of information take tablets that are used for pregnancy termination. It occurs that a great majority turn back to maternity to complete abortion because the medicamental abortion has turned out to be unsuccessful.

### **Perceptions of abortion**

Abortion is perceived as something that is ‘secret’. It is predominantly perceived as a negative phenomenon but sometimes as something necessary and in some cases unavoidable. Depending on point of view, religion and age of women, women’s thoughts on abortion change.

Some women judge that they have had abortion whereas other refuse categorically the idea of abortion. Nevertheless, some participants in the study considered abortion and reasons for abortion as ‘meaningless’. Other women experience it as release. It is important to take into consideration the reasons for abortion and when it is proved, to measure the rate of its acceptance. In general, the termination of pregnancy for health causes, abnormal fetal growth and in some cases even for sexual abuse is unacceptable.

### **The distinctions of perceptions:**

When the findings of the study on thoughts regarding abortion, women from Tirane are isolated from women from all other places in the Albanian sample. Women who live in Tirane believe that abortion must exist as an option especially when the difficult financial condition it concerned.

Some of them say that if abortion had not existed as an option, poverty would have increased drastically. Women living in urban areas generally consider abortion as normal when the reason for abortion is valuable. Even though they would not like to have abortion, they accept it as something they must be done. “We belong to this society, and it is known that the economic conditions are not so good

and this is the reason why I would have an abortion. I am a student, I don't work and I am not capable of taking care of myself, imagine to take care of my child. If it happened, nothing else would be discussed. I would not have another choice". Female, 21 year-old Tirane, urban area ( Group discussion).

Given that the majority of women from Tirane declare that abortion is not a good thing but it should be an option whereas women from other urban areas such as Shkoder and Lezha have a different opinion. In such group, women of an older age were against abortion. Nevertheless, they believed that if there is a strong reason, they should be allowed to have an abortion.

Strangely, the younger generations were more determined in their thought that abortion must not be present in our society. According to them, abortion is a crime. "I hope in God that I would never experience it because otherwise I would hate myself." woman, 24 year old from Lezha (Group discussion). Women who lived in urban areas do not hesitate to talk about their experiences of abortion whereas women in rural areas were more conservative. They believe that abortion is a sin and if they have abortion, it is a moral issue, thus they hesitate to discuss about it especially in the presence of women they know. "Shame" is also used to describe women that have abortion. Even for married and unmarried women abortion is not a topic about which women talk freely. On the contrary, the most of them keep secret the fact and use the protective mechanisms to justify their behaviours. During the observation of focus groups, abortion is perceived differently to married and unmarried women. If she is married, has had sexual intercourse and has got pregnant with her husband, abortion is not considered as so important issue. However, if this affects a young girl, this issue is considered a taboo.

Nevertheless, some women especially those who had abortion, declare that it is a greater sin if they keep the child and you decide to raise him or her in poverty. Some others declare that it is not a sin if she aborts fetus before the third month of pregnancy but after this period it is considered a sin. Some decide if abortion does represent a sin or not based on their reasoning for it. "Women who have abortion only because they have many daughters, it is not right because the child is a gift from God without taking into account if it is a baby girl or boy"

Female, 32 year-old from Shkoder (In-depth interview )

### **From religious aspect**

For Muslims and also for Christians, abortion is categorically prohibited. The majority of participants in the study describe abortion as a sin.

Nevertheless, the Islamic approach to the issue of pregnancy prevention and to abortion seems to be more balanced. The Islam allows women to prevent pregnancy but prohibits them to terminate pregnancy

after it has already started. Abortion after implantation of a fertilized egg in the uterine wall is absolutely prohibited and it is considered a crime against law of God and against the fetus itself.

What does the Islamic jurisprudence say about abortion of the created child but it is ill? The assembly of Fokhut Islam organization in the Muslim World League, during the 12th meeting hold in Meca on February 11-18,1990 discussed about abortion and after the debate from the commision of assembly and medical specialists were determined some important issues. In such assembly it was decided that if pregnancy has come to the period of one hundred and twenty days, abortion is not allowed even though the medical control ascertains that the baby is physically or psychically. Abortion after one hundred and twenty days have allowed only in those cases when is asertained that keeping pregnancy risks the mother's life. In these cases abortion is allowed even if it is proved that it is a healthy pregnancy in order to avoid one of the greatest damages, loss of woman. However, abortion can be allowed even in those cases when pregnancy did not achieved one hundred and twenty day from the beginning of pregnancy and from the medical report of trustful doctors it is ascertained that the baby is with defects in creation and it can not be cured. If the child will live, he or she will have a difficult and harmful life and this will be difficult for his or her family. In the given case abortion is allowed with the request of two parents.

According to the thoughts of scholars, abortion is prohibited since the first day of embroy creation.

Its prohibition becomes greater, the more days pass and in all cases it is an obligation for human to regret for this crime. " Abortion is not allowed in accordance with the rules of the Islamic jurisprudence neither in the beginning of pregnancy nor after, " The weight of sin is depending on the time of pregnancy. At the begining of pregnancy, the sin is lighter and the more the child is increased in the mother's belly, the greater is the sin of baby abortion.

### **Reasons for abortion**

Parentthesis: In accordance with the Albanian law, abortion represents family planning method.

Participants in the study are asked that which circumstances can urge women to terminate pregnancy. From the findings of focus groups and in-depth interviews, the participants highlight the financial factors, gender election, grandmother complex, the young age of women and the married and unmarried women's perceptions are reflected.

### **Financial reasons**

Acording to INSTAT, the 15-29 group age with 33,5% has the highest rate of unemployment therefore abortion can be an easier choice than raising another child. In the case of married women, the

financial circumstances and the number of pregnancies are mentioned as the most frequent reason for abortion. Taking into consideration the average size of the family economy (2004) that is 6.5 members for family and low incomes, people estimate that it is cheaper to have an abortion than to raise a child. The low cost of abortion contributes to this issue (from 50€ to 100 €, depending on whether abortion is performed in a private clinic or hospital). People manage to find money asking help from friends or spending their savings.

The financial conditions play an important role in the decision on abortion.

“ I was afraid that I could not raise my child in the right way and to provide him or her with good conditions. I had two other children.”

Female, 36 year old, Tirane (In-depth interview)

“I had abortion, my husband asked me to abort. In this time we were unemployed so the fear that I would not be able to raise the child in a better environment obliged me to have abortion”

Female, 34 year old, Tirane (In-depth interview)

“I terminated pregnancy in agreement with my husband. We both agreed that it was too early to have another child because my son was only 9 months when I got pregnant for the second time. Therefore, I decided on abortion because we did not wanted to have another child. We lived in difficult living conditions and nobody in family was working. I could not just think of having the third child”.

Female, 31 year old, Durres (In-depth interview)

“Well, the main reason was that my third son was still very little and before he became one year old, I have to give birth to my children consequently I would have had three very little children to take care of. We would have had to feed three children meantime only my husband was working.”

## **Grandmother Complex**

Before the 2000s the Albanian women married very young. The majority of women are still fertile and when their older child has passed twenty-year-old age. Especially in rural areas, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or daughter can be pregnant at the same time. Women declare that it is inappropriate to have a child when even your child is adult and what is more is married.

Female from Shkoder, 45 year old, rural (focus group). My daughter had just engaged. I was 43 year old and I got pregnant. I was so ashamed.

## Gender Selection

Now people have the possibility to choose and decide whether they want to have a boy or girl and later to decide on abortion if the fetal gender is not the desired one. In the Albanian tradition, boys play an important role in the family according to declarations of the participants in focus groups. Boys are the priority, successors and the honour of the family. They are the hereditary of the family name and in the most cases the whole fortune is inherited by boys. (It depends on the area)

Girls are considered as ‘foreign persons’ because they will marry and will be the wives of somebody and no more part of the family. The quote exist “the girls is born in a foreign house and when she gets married, goes to her own house”. Women are exerted power to have boys. Taking into consideration that this issue does not depend on her, she can be obliged to elect the gender of the child aborting the female fetus until it will get pregnant and the fetus is boy. The female participant in the study gave many examples for the gender election. The gynecologist admit that this practice does exist and it is not rare. In the most of cases women are obliged to have abortion if there is pressure from the family on them to have a boy. On the other hand, women even though they prefer to have boys, show more sensitivity in such cases. According to gynecologist, it is common for women to abort secretly taking into consideration that her husband will not allow giving birth to another girl in the family, a thing that will risk marriage and family of the wife.

Female, 29 year old, rural. “My husband was the only boy and desired to have a boy. My mother-in-law too. After two daughters, I have aborted twice. I hope not not disappoint next time”

In conclusion, the decision on pregnancy termination often is affected by many factors. Frequently getting pregnant is related to the difficult economic conditions, problems in the family and the gender selection and pressure on having a boy.

## The young age of women

The decrease of age of sexual intercourse is an indicator of the increase of abortions to the youngs who use more rarely contraceptive methods and have contact with many partners.

“There is an increase at frequency of sexual activity especially to the youngsters. In Albania, abortions among teenagers make up about 5 % of the total number. The percentage of abortions to teenager that live in urban areas is much more higher that to them who live in rural areas (respectively 65.1% and 34,9 % for 2012). Abortions with request of the female teenager have decreased for 2009-2012 period (respectively 37.2 % and 20.1 %)

Female, 21 year old, Tirane (In-depth interview)

“I was only 15 years old when I got pregnant. I did not know. It has been a terrible thing. My partner sent me to a private clinic.”

Female, 18 years old, Tirane (In-depth interview)

“ It happened in the second year of gymnasium. My parents accompanied me. They spoke with the gynecologist. Now I feel too confused”.

The age of couple and especially of the female represents a reason for abortion. In such cases abortion is normally required by the girl’s parents who think that their girl is too young and should not be sacrificed keeping the child.

### **Unmarried women**

‘Those about we do not talk’ circumstances where the unwanted pregnancy emerges to the unmarried women are completely different. If man does not accept to marry to the partner who has got pregnant, abortion should be carried out in secrecy and very soon in order that nobody will understand it. This happens due to the fear that gossips would spread very quickly (See also chapter 3). If people learn this, there could be consequences. That woman would be remembered always as “that who had abortion” and the possibilities that she could be married are too low.

According to the participants in the focus group, these women will be considered differently. All people including even their parents and family will keep distance from them. She will humiliate the family and her parents will hesitate to tell others who is their daughter.

Taking into consideration that there is no support network for mothers that raise children alone, the raising of children is very difficult especially when they can not find support for help to their family. The majority of women participating in the study agree with the fact that the man refuses to raise his child. However, abortion should be taken into consideration. This was the most frequent reason why the unmarried women decide to have abortion. The local mentality is that the children who are raised only by a parent, even in good living conditions, are always excluded and discriminated by the older ones and the peers. Women declare that one of the reasons why the unmarried women must have abortion is this type of discrimination. According to them, people who tend to entitle and call these children by different names such as ‘brat’. On the other hand, the economic conditions should be another obstacle to unmarried women.

### **The perceived consequences of abortion**

Abortion is often experienced with depression. Women that have had abortion reported that they have

been depressed, some feel traumatized punishing themselves and regretting for what they have done. “I felt emotionally and physically ill. I felt weak. My children were too little and needed to take care of them and I was not able to do anything. I felt very bad for many days consecutively.

Female, 25 years old, urban (Group discussion)

“I have difficulty watching television programmes with babies. After abortion, I try to neglect even the talks with children.”

Female, 31 years old, Durrës, urban (In-depth interview)

In the Albanian culture, the worst thing that could happen to a woman is infertility. Almost all women mention fertility as one of the major consequences of abortions and particularly if it happens in the first pregnancy. Some interpreted infertility on the basis of religion as God’s punishment whereas to others as reason for abortion.

The gynecologist did not mention none of these consequences. They discussed if infertility can be caused by abortion. According to them, infertility can be caused by any infection that happens after abortion and not as a complication of the process of abortion itself.

## **Feelings towards abortion**

Despite the fact that in the study, the cooperation between women is the right one, again hesitation appears in expressing feelings and emotions (especially to focus groups). The protective mechanisms could be also observed. The interviewer had to encourage them some times in order to get the replies from women as far as their feeling about abortion are concerned.

Mainly during the in-depth interviews, there were women who rarely has emotional reactions. This happened because it maybe has passed a time since the moment they had aborted or maybe because they felt guilty for their actions. In most of cases, the reason for abortion is perceived to be much stronger than the act and the abortion feeling.

“Interviewer: How did you feel after abortion psychologically and emotionally?”

Interviewee: I felt a bit tired and I was cold but when strength return, you forget for it.”

Female, 38 years old, Tirane, urban (in-depth interview)

Mixed feelings were expressed by women. Depending on the character and age of women, feelings are expressed differently. While some were satisfied and released, some other stated that they regretful for what they have done. In addition, some would like to turn the time back to change their actions. The participants in group discussions, some of them express that they not even think about it. Nevertheless, there were women who show their repentance regarding what they have done.

“After the first two abortions, I felt normal, sometimes even satisfied because I had solved the problem. I have suffered only after the third abortion. Sometimes I thought about what age would that child have today... I can never forgive myself that I did not give birth to my third child.”

Female, 40 years old, Shkoder, urban (In-depth interview)

## **Time for abortion**

Abortion is allowed up to 12 week of pregnancy and after this period, depending on the mother's health and fetal health, a special permission that is given by a specialized medical commission.

The termination of pregnancy for medical reasons can be carried out up to the 22nd week, in case that a commission comprised of 3 doctors, after the examination and consultation, judges that the continuation of pregnancy and/or birth of child risk women's life and health. When the commission judges that fetus has malformation incompatible with life or invalidizing diseases with unsure treatment, it decides the pregnancy termination at anytime. In law it is determined that the health personel should inform the woman that requires to terminate pregnancy about the health risks that abortion can bring about and also to inform the woman and couple about the legal rights that derive from the law for pregnancy termination. The woman should be informed about the institutions that provide financial and psycho-social support for women and also for the clinics and hospitals that carry out pregnancy termination according to the approved standards. In case the woman replicates the request for pregnancy termination, the doctor asks for written confirmation from the woman within 7 days since the first request. In the case that deadline of 7 days causes to surpass the defined term in this law, the doctor can decide that this term to be at least 2 days. Whereas for the cases when the pregnant is an infant girl (under 16 years old) the law defines that beside the approval from the infant girl herself, is necessary even the approval of parent or the legal caretaker of the girl.

Nevertheless, from women's confessions it is considered that some private clinics carry out abortion even later in pregnancy. Women who took part in discussions show cases when relatives themselves and their cousins had abortion even after third month of pregnancy. According to them, the private clinics have abortion even at the fifth month of pregnancy or later especially if the doctor is a relative of the patient or pays a high amount for abortion.

“I have aborted at the fourth month of pregnancy due to the gender of child.

Female, 25, Shkoder, rural (Group discussion)

Women in general are aware of the time limit for abortion from family member and friends.

Taking into consideration that people have the tendency to adapt the rules in the way they adopt, some explain the time for abortion as too important for the mother's health: "the earlier the better" to reduce the possibility of complications during and after abortion. Some others relate it to the religion stating that abortion should be carried out before the child has spirit, after that to have abortion is sin. The majority of women that have experienced abortion, explain the time for abortion. The sooner the abortion is carried out, the easier they experience abortion.

### **The location of abortion**

Immediately after abortion legalization, the number of abortion carried out by women who lived in village was much higher than of those who lived in city whereas at present it looks as the ratio has changed. According to the specialists of Public Health Institute happens due to the internal migration of population from rural areas to urban ones. The age group that heads for hospital for intervention is 25-34 age group.

According to the date of INSTAT, about 93% of abortions are carried out by married women in state clinics whereas the single women seem to prefer better performing terminations in private clinics. The specialists link this fact to keeping secrecy and convenience of practices of performing abortion in the private sector despite that the payment is almost double of that they must pay in the public sector.

The findings of the study show that women prefer to go in private clinics rather than in public ones for many reasons. These reasons also depend on the issue whether the woman that is having abortion is married or not. The married women in general require a better service, a higher level of hygiene, better gynecologists and a better treatment. Most of the women participating in the study state that the public clinics can not provide such services and this is the reason why the majority of them better would go in private clinics to have abortion. After all, they feel that the doctor's behaviour changes and it is better when you pay. Above all, according to the participant in the study, in private clinics it is not necessary to wait for long time to have abortion as it happens in the public clinics. Nevertheless, some women that have had abortion previously and have experienced it in hospital are satisfied with conditions and treatment.

For unmarried women, the priorities change. Confidentiality is a priority when the unmarried woman requires abortion, such a thing could not be provided by public clinics. Personal informations about patient are necessary and above all, patients see each other. The possibilities that patients could know each other are great, as all cities are relatively small. Consequently, the unmarried women prefer to have abortion in private clinics.

“The unmarried women go to other cities to have abortion due to the confidentiality! For example, if a mother lives in Shkoder then she will go in Tirane or Rreshen to have abortion and vice versa”.  
Gynecologist, Shkoder, urban (In-depth interview).

Due to the critics and gossips, the alone mothers neglect abortions in public institutions! Only some of them have abortion there!

Gynecologist, Tirane, urban, Albanian (In-depth interview)

“The unmarried women go to Tirane for abortion in order that nobody will learn what they have done.” Woman, 26 years old, Shijak, urban (Group discussion)

“They go to Rreshen. It is important to keep it secret and nobody to understand it.”

Woman, 19, Lezhe, rural (Group discussion)

## Conclusions

This study focuses on women's perceptions and thoughts regarding changes for abortion. The perceptions and thoughts are closely linked to the social trends. In order to dig deeper for the reasons for abortion, thoughts and perception regarding abortion, the research includes the qualitative research with group discussion and in-depth interviews. In the group discussion, women expressed freely about their sisters', cousins' and friends' experiences but less about their personal experience. Their discussion about their experience of abortion during the in-depth interviews was too fragile and sensitive although most of them manage to give voice to their thoughts and emotions experience because of abortion.

By using the group discussion and interviews about elective abortion, the issues emerged establishing consciousness and openness among participants. The findings of focus groups and the in-depth interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

This study because of its qualitative nature, only describes the thoughts and perceptions of different groups who are interviewed. These groups are chosen in a representative manner for the Albanian society. Women showed perceptions, reasons and different consequences for abortion. Abortion is acceptable in general if it carried out for health reasons, fetal abnormalities and sexual abuse. In addition, among the married women a general thought does exist that abortion is quite acceptable. Women mention the financial reasons (they are unable to raise another child) as a main reason for abortion. Afterwards, women tell when they got pregnant immediately after they gave birth to a child and therefore abortion was the only option. When they got pregnant, they did not desire to have another child. The later tells that abortion is a family planning method (despite that legally it did not become part of the methods of family planning) is related to the general use of the removal method as a traditional method. The older unmarried

women have a reproductivity regime that consists of marital sex, the used of removal method and of abortion as we aforementioned. Beside the economic issued, another reason part of the Albania reality for abortion is the preference for males (gender election from research has abortion case at the eighth month). Abortions among unmarried women are 'those about which we do not talk'. Although the thoughts on premarital sex (and sometimes on cohabitation) have changed especially in Tirane, the thoughts on women that get pregnant before marriage and their need to have abortion still reflects the traditional fundamental rules (men want to marry to virgins). The findings of focus groups in areas of Lezha, Shkoder, Durres were surprising where especially the young women showed strongly that they consider abortion as a sin and it must not be allowed. The religious values must be based on these thoughts. Therefore, on the one hand we see the modernization trends especially in Tirane but on the other, we see the trends of religious conservatism.

In general, women said that abortion is a sin. Women who have had abortion tell about pains (pills) and the sense of guilty. Some of women felt traumatized (pills), regretful for what they have done. The belief that abortion causes infertility (the worst thing that a woman can experience) strengthens the belief that abortion will be accompanied by 'punishment'. The participants that have experienced abortion, were not so informed about the used method for abortion especially about the poisonous mediament RU-486.

## Recommendations

The focus on informed choice for abortion; how it is done; law for abortion but especially on:

Which methods are used in clinics? Which are the real consequences: pain, emotional pains, the influences on health? How should the patients cope with them? Counseling after abortion especially emotional consequences.

The ensurance and provision with the informed choice after abortion for all types of contraceptives for all women who have experienced abortion. Explain the perceived and real negative sides.

Targeting/ profile: older couples that do not want to have children (spiral); the young women: prevention of pregnancy with pills, condoms and spirals.

The study highlights the serious consequences of being pregnant to unmarried women. The focus on sexual education especially to the youngsters; information about sexuality, pregnancy, the consequences of pregnancy, the use of contraceptives.

Educating parents for the necessity of being opened, what should be done in case their daughters get pregnant.

Education of boy about double moral.

Sexual education campaigns especially for youngsters through TV, particularly the sexual education compaign in school.

Focus on effective programmes for the prevention of pregnancy to teenagers.

The community commitment to pregnancy prevention to teenagers. It should be worked on informative programmes for parents in order that their communications with children be effective.

The promotions of strategies that helps the youngsters to neglect situations which lead them to dangerous behaviours.

The increase in support of organizations, mission that include pregnancy prevention, IST, birth control and abortions to teenagers.

The identification of the most risked groups for pregnancy or abortions (such as the Roma community) and providing support for them.

Promotion of marriages after age 18 in terms of information and empowerment of the role of girls and the influence on the cultural normat which support early marriages.

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## Interview

Interviewer: You have had experienced three abortions or am I wrong?

Interviewee: Yes, I have had three abortions.

Interviewer: Have you had abortions after the birth of two children?

Interviewee: Yes, all of them. I know it is not good what I have done; I know that there is no woman that likes to have abortion but you do not have other choice when you do not have the minimal living conditions.

Interviewer: When you learned about the unwanted pregnancy, what did you do? How did you decide on preventing those pregnancies? Who did you discuss with?

Interviewee: I lost my mind. I discussed only with my husband and one friend. Nobody else knows this.

Interviewer: Where did you carry out abortion?

Interviewer: Two of them were carried in hospital and the third at home. I paid a lot lek.

Interviewer: Who recommended you to go there?

Interviewee: A friend of mine.

Interviewer: Which method did the doctor used for abortion?

Interviewee: Surgical. I felt nothing because they made me injections and I did not know anything until I woke up.

Interviewer: Have you heard of other abortion methods?

Interviewee: Yes, I have used the pill as well and an abortion with vacuum.. Horror.

Interviewer: Did the doctor advised of the methods how to be protected after that? Did he or she say to go for control?

Interviewee: Yes, they said that I should be protected but my husband does not accept to use protective devices.

Interviewer: How did you feel after abortion?

Interviewee: I had nothing to do. However, time to time it happens to me that I become affected by the feeling of anxiety which it seems it is killing. I fear that God is punishing me.

Female, 28, Tirane, rural (In-depth interview)