



SOCIETY OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNAECOLOGISTS OF PAKISTAN

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SOGP Policy Position Paper on "Access to Reproductive Health Care Services"

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan (SOGP) is a nationwide professional association of obstetricians, gynecologists and health professionals working on maternal health. Since its inception SOGP has worked towards reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. SOGP is working to help achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 (reduce child mortality) and 5 (improve maternal health) in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Government, professional organizations and civil society.

Data illustrate that unsafe abortion is responsible for 5.6% of maternal mortality in Pakistan (PDHS 2007). Hospital statistics illustrate that unsafe abortion accounts for 10-12% of maternal deaths (SNJ 1991). Recent national study estimated that 2.2 million abortions took place in Pakistan in 2012 with an annual abortion rate of 50 per 1,000 women. About 700,000 women reported to health facilities for treatment of complications due to unsafe abortion during the same year (2012- Population Council and Guttmacher Institute). The worst affected are poor and vulnerable groups of women. SOGP affirms the following policy position on reproductive health care services:

- SOGP believes that reproductive healthcare is a basic human right where women and men have control over their reproductive lives and are able to significantly improve the health and welfare of their families and communities
- There should be universal access to modern methods of family planning (birth spacing) and Essential and Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) services



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- Uterine evacuation should be carried out by World Health Organization (WHO) recommended techniques and protocols under safe, sterile conditions, by trained, competent professionals in order to protect the life, health and future fertility of the woman.
- Postabortion care (PAC) services should be standardized, and women should be offered medical methods or suction evacuation (manual vacuum aspiration-MVA or electric suction). D&E with sharp curettage, under general anesthesia, should not be the first line of treatment.
- Counseling for family planning methods should be offered to women in antenatal/postnatal and outpatient clinics. SOGP strongly supports all programs that will promote contraceptive use in order to reduce rates of unwanted/unplanned pregnancy.
- Postabortion care should be an integral part of the continuum of care.
- Training in Essential & EmONC services, including post abortion care, should be mandatory in medical colleges, nursing & midwifery schools and paramedical training centers.
- Easy access to therapeutic and postabortion care and family planning services will have a dramatic positive impact on women's health in general and on maternal and infant mortality in particular.

Prof. Tasneem Ashraf
President SOGP