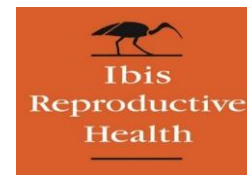


“Traveling abroad from countries where abortion is legal:
the social-economic costs of GA restrictions and the
perspectives of travellers on abortion rights”

**ERC PROJECT BAR2LEGAB
FINAL DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE
Day 2. 23rd June 2022**



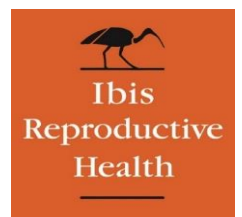
Abortion Information Governance & Travels Across European Borders

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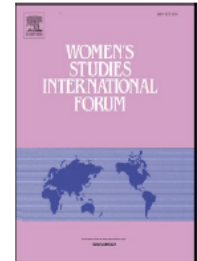




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Abortion information governance and women's travels across European borders

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Abortion Information Governance

Reproductive governance

(Morgan and Roberts 2012)



Abortion governance

Information = essential part
of good quality abortion
services (WHO 2003; 2012; 2022)

Abortion information governance

Abortion Care Information

(1) **Where** do women who travel abroad for legal abortion **seek and find** the information they deem important to make decisions?

(2) **What** kind of **information governance** is facilitating or obstructing women's trajectories to safe abortion across borders in Europe?

European laws on abortion information

Republic of Ireland (before 2019) -> mandatory info about alternatives to abortion

Germany -> until 2019: prohibited to abortion providers to offer public information about their services.

Italy -> mandatory info about alternatives to abortion.

France-> explicit mention to women's right to info about abortion methods + law against interference to abortion.

Spain ->explicit mention to women's right to information about abortion methods.

and other factors influencing accessibility

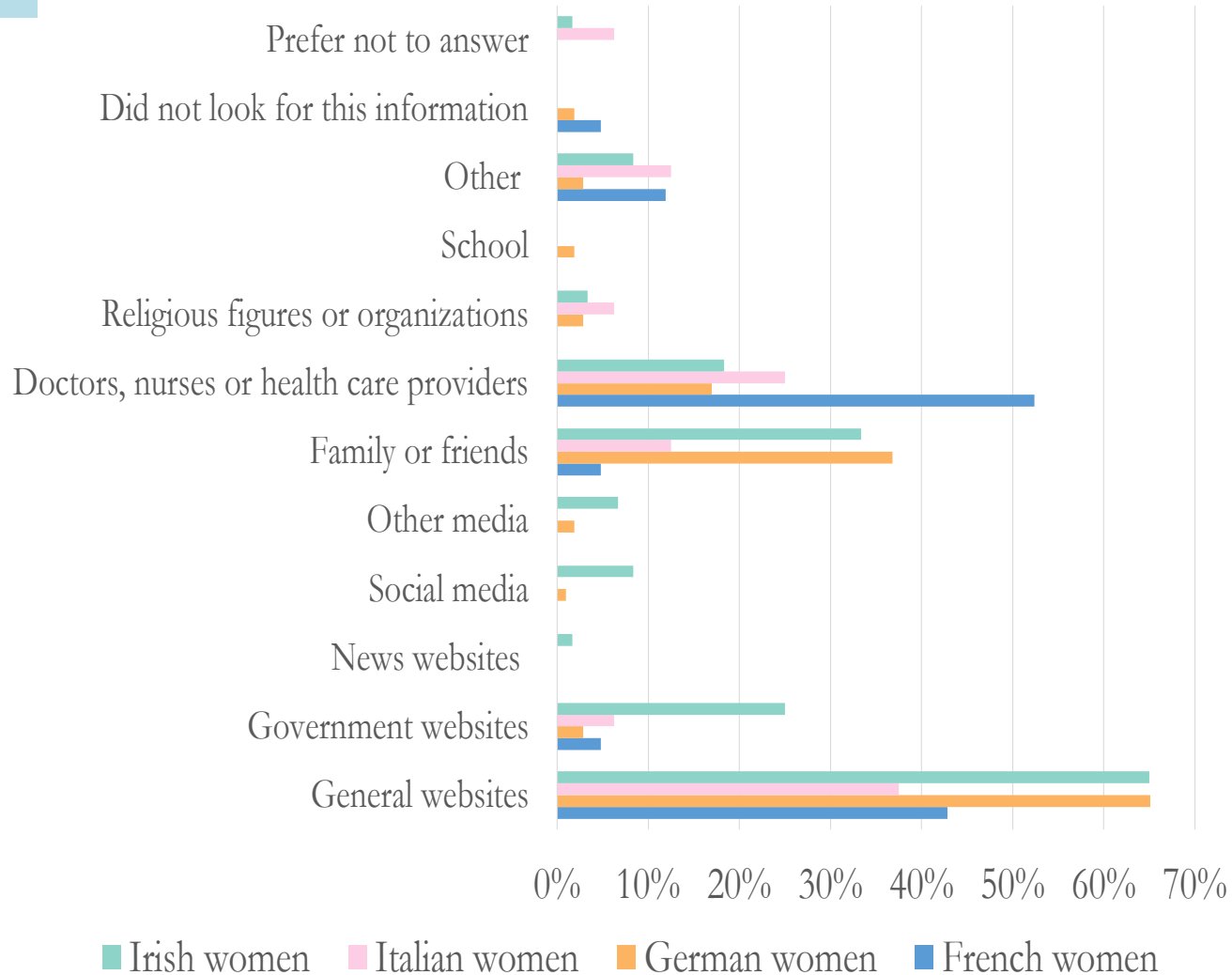
What information?

Local legal framework
Local facilities
Local carepaths
Abortion techniques and risks
Transnational abortion provision
Practicalities of abortion travels
Self-managed abortion

VISIBILITY - ACCESSIBILITY - RELIABILITY

Survey

Where did women get information about abortion in the UK or the Netherlands?



Governmental sources, health professionals, healthcare system

FRANCE

The screenshot shows the homepage of the IVG.GOUV.FR website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with three main sections: 'Je m'informe sur l'IVG', 'IVG, qui peut m'aider?', and 'IVG, c'est mon droit'. Below this, a search bar and a phone number '0 800 08 11 11' are visible. The main content area is titled 'Je m'informe sur l'IVG' and contains a search bar and a list of articles. The articles are:

- Avortement : quels sont les délais à respecter pour avorter ?** (26.09.13) - En France, l'avortement peut être pratiqué jusqu'à la fin de la 12e semaine de (...)
- IVG médicamenteuse** (25.09.13) - Comment se passe une IVG médicamenteuse ? Peut-on avorter seule ? (...)
- IVG chirurgicale** (25.09.13) - L'IVG chirurgicale - ou IVG par aspiration - peut être pratiquée jusqu'à la (...)
- Choisir sa contraception après l'IVG** (25.09.13) - Après un avortement, il est indispensable de se munir dès que possible d'une (...)

-> **Public acknowledgement** of local provision and barriers and transnational abortion.

* governmental website on abortion

* national helpline

Seeking info: from health professionals

Expectations: finding support

Governemental sources, health professionals, healthcare system

ITALY

-> **Disregarding** accessibility of abortion locally and abroad.

*No governemental website on abortion provision

*No governamental national helpline

Seeking info: from health professionals

Expectations: uncertainty

Elisabetta

Elisabetta. 36y, 14wks, full-time employed, married, Catholic, FA, recr. in ESP:
Institutional websites explaining women's rights or how therapeutic abortion (abortion for FA) works do not exist in Italy, I have found information on other more specialist websites, [...] then I wondered: if I find on these websites that I have the right to aspiration until 16th week [of pregnancy], why is this not performed in Italy?

Governemental sources, health professionals, healthcare system

GERMANY

-> **Making** local and transnational **abortion invisible.**

* no governemental website

Seeking info: from health professionals

Expectations: uncertainty

Maria

Maria, 25 y, 17 w, full-time, in a relationship, recr. NL:

Researcher: *Did he [the OBGYN] write you a referral? Or he didn't do that?*

Maria: ***No, he told me you have to get it for yourself because I'm not allowed to give you that information.*** *But... yeah at least he was like I know you will find a clinic there very easy and it will be good for you because they are very specialised on it. And of course, I will be taking care of you here whatever you decide. Don't worry about it, you know? if you decide to have a kid or not I will be here for you. So, it makes me feel better because at least he was not judging me or whatever.*

Governemental sources, health professionals, healthcare system

REPUBLIC
OF
IRELAND

-> **'Peripheral governance'** (Fletcher 2013)

Seeking info: very few from health professionals

Expectations: stigma, hp not allowed to discuss abortion

Fortunate Encounters

Darissa, Republic of Ireland, recr. in the UK

DARISSA: *The hospital in Ireland... Gave us all the information that we needed and they were very supportive ... and we were able to make contact. They gave us the contact information so we were able to contact then ourselves the clinic and that's when we got the appointment for today so.*

Ester, Italy, recr. UK

Researcher:. *And about the possibility of travelling to terminate the pregnancy after you decided so, through the technique you preferred, have you discussed this option with anyone in Italy?*

ESTER: *No, I tell you, really not...we have just mentioned it with the last [medical] unit we went to, but not really discussed...Just some kind of smile «yes, abroad it's easier», a sort of **quasi-approval**, but nobody told me: «look...here is the thing». **Information never came from them**, I don't know how to put it, it always is: **«We know, but...»**. Everything originated from us.*

SRHR organisations and activist groups

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Referendum -> visibility of abortion AND of abortion support groups

- √ National family planning associations
- √ Other associations, groups, and helplines in support of women's reproductive health
- √ Abortion fund (ASN)

SRHR organisations and activist groups

FRANCE

Planning Familial -> huge support

✓ National family planning associations

Other associations , groups and helplines in
support of women's reproductive health

Abortion fund

SRHR organisations and activist groups

ITALY

Not so common to find info through SRHR groups
(at the time of the research)

National family planning associations

√ Other associations , groups and helplines in support of
women's reproductive health

Abortion fund

GERMANY

Data not clear

√ National family planning associations

Other associations , groups and helplines in support of
women's reproductive health

Abortion fund

Online and transnational information flow

→ Other countries' governmental websites

Tien, Republic of Ireland

Tien: Yeah. I go online. ... I saw the NHS first. Maybe we just believe and trust in the government site and just read the information from that.

Researcher: Why didn't you go to anyone in Ireland?

Tien: They are very sensitive about abortion. And I think we shouldn't talk about that in that country.

→ Clinics reach out to international clients (websites)

→ Clinics inform and support international women to find care in other countries

Emmanuelle, France

*It's me who had to do all the steps, alone. It's me who had to found out the numbers by myself. Fortunately, I've had the chance to bump into **a very kind and supportive person [in a clinic] in Spain**. She told us the clinics to call, given that it wasn't possible to do it with them any longer, otherwise I would have been somehow lost.*

Online and transnational information flow

(Local) and Transnational abortion support groups and funds with a robust online and offline visibility turned out to be crucial for many women seeking info about abortion access abroad in their situation.

Abortion Information Sought & Found

➤ Women living in ROI:

Seek information online; from GP; women's health clinics or combination of all.

Find information online (mainly SRHR groups); from GP; hospitals; helplines; clinic's websites in UK; governmental website in UK

➤ Women living in IT

Seek information in *consultori*; OBGYN; hospitals; online; SRHR groups, informal network.

Find information from OBGYN; online forums; clinic's websites in UK, NL, ESP.

➤ Women living in FR

Seek information from GP; OBGYN; *Planning Familial*; online.

Find information from *Planning Familial*; GPs; clinic's websites in UK, NL, ESP.

➤ Women living in D

Seek information from GP; OBGYN; *Profamilia*; online.

Find information from OBGYN; *Profamilia*, from clinic's websites in UK, NL, ESP.

Direct or indirect ONLINE RESEARCH is common to ALL interviewees

Experiences of (Mis)information

→ **Women living in IT, FR, D (non ROI)**

→ Different kind of **(mis)information** reported:

- * Lack of available services
- * No information about services in other locations
- * Non-existing techniques (i.e., surgical abortion in 2nd trimester)
- * Misleading information (i.e., risk of infertility or sterility)
- * Stigmatising information
- * Patchy or incomplete information
- * Refusal of care with no referral (conscientious objection?)

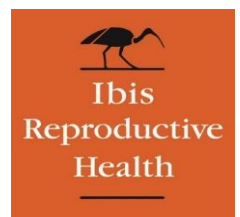
Conclusions:

Effects of Abortion Information Governance

- i. Public approaches** to abortion information:
 - a. affect abortion **visibility** +
 - b. affect women's **access**
 - c. affect **type and quality** of info
- ii. Abortion information online**
- iii.** Seeking a info may **delay** their treatment
- iv. Health professionals key source**
- v. Local and transnational associations** -> abortion travel and self-managed abortion
- vi.** Difficult access to information about abortion in general contribute to **wrong assumptions, information and strong stigma around self-managed abortion**

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