

MALE PARTNERS & PREMARITAL ABORTION CARE

About the Study

Exploring Male Engagement in Premarital Abortion: Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Young Women and Men in New Delhi, India is a study done in partnership with Promundo-US with support from MacArthur Foundation.

The study aims to:

- Contribute to the small but growing body of research on how men are involved; and
- Understand how they can become more involved as supportive respectful partners in abortion care.

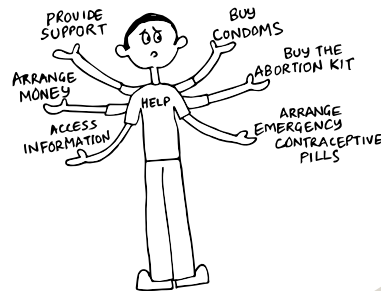
An intersectional (considering various axes such as gender, caste, class, education, etc.) qualitative study based on discussions and interviews with young unmarried men and women seeking abortion, and general unmarried youth as well as service providers, including healthcare professional and policy experts.

Study Context

- Unsafe abortions are the third leading cause of maternal deaths in India, they contribute to 8% of such deaths annually.
- Despite legal access to abortion services, unmarried people face challenges due to secrecy, shame and stigma.
- Limited evidence on the vulnerability of the young and unmarried.
- Little is known about the socio-economic and gender dynamics underlying an unmarried couples' abortion decision-making process.

MEN ARE INVOLVED IN WAYS THAT ARE SUPPORTIVE

- Accompanying partners to seek services
- Procuring medicines & information

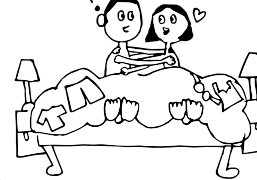


- Providing emotional support
- Serving as all-in-one service providers

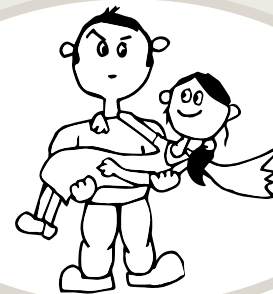
MALE INVOLVEMENT OFTEN A TIGHTROPE BETWEEN GENDERED EXPECTATIONS & CARE FOR PARTNER

- Men seen as 'protectors' & 'responsible' for women's honor. Hence, feel pressured to 'take control'

I TAKE YOU, TO BE MY LAWFULLY WEDDED WIFE TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, FROM THIS DAY FORWARD ...



- Men genuinely concerned about partner & her health



SHAME & STIGMA SHAPE MALE INVOLVEMENT

- Men afraid of being considered sexual predators
- Some support partners behind-the-scenes due to fear



MEN TEND TO HANDLE THE SITUATION ALONE

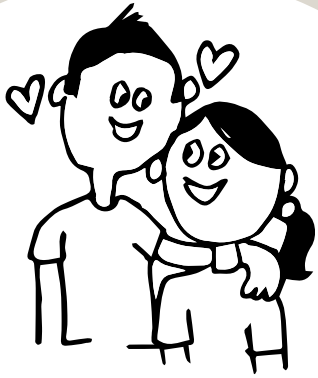
- Lack of information & guidance
- Stigma prevents men from reaching out

It is strange for me to speak about all this. I have never spoken about this to anyone. This is the first time I am opening up about that experience. I was reluctant initially."

~ 29 yrs, Unmarried male whose female partner went through an abortion

**MALE SUPPORT
DEPENDENT ON MOBILITY
OF THE MALE
& FEMALE PARTNER**

- Male involvement greater when cohabiting with female partner & when living alone/away from family



**MALE INVOLVEMENT
VARIES WITH THE COUPLES'
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

- Lesser dependence of economically independent women on their male partners for abortion services; they mostly sought emotional support.



**MEN RELY ON PEERS
& INTERNET FOR
INFORMATION**

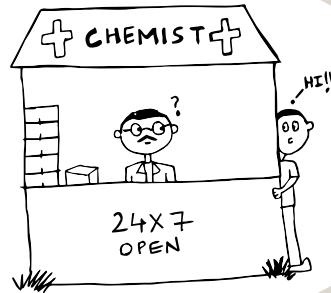
- Men reluctant to reach out, even to their peers. They depend on 'one trusted friend.'
- Peer 'whisper networks' often provide hurried and inaccurate information, resulting in complications.

**LIMITED INTERACTION
BETWEEN MEN & SERVICE
PROVIDERS**

- Service providers reprimanding of men



- Men afraid to interact with service providers



Engaging Men in Abortion Care

**PRIORITIZE MEN'S ROLE
IN DISCUSSIONS AROUND
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

- Capture what men think, feel & do

**LEVERAGE MEN'S
ROLE AS QUASI-
SERVICE PROVIDERS**

- Not only as partners, but also as friends, peers, family members, etc.

**STRENGTHEN
ENGAGEMENT
BETWEEN SERVICE
PROVIDERS & MEN**

- Healthcare professionals, clinicians, chemists, etc.



**ENGAGE MEN TO
ADDRESS GENDER NORMS**

- Around contraception, consent, notions of honor & dignity, etc.
- Men's expression of their vulnerabilities

**ENCOURAGE
CONVERSATIONS ON
SEX & SEXUALITY**

- Among peers, family, school, community, etc.