

Report: Abortion laws don't stop abortions

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An international study reported in the British journal Lancet said abortion laws do not necessarily influence a woman's decision to have an abortion.

Researchers from the World Health Organization in Geneva and the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive rights group in New York, said 13 percent of women's deaths during pregnancy and childbirth are caused by abortion, The New York Times said Friday.

The study found about 20 million abortions that would be considered unsafe are performed each year, and 67,000 women die as a result of complications.

"Generally, where abortion is legal it will be provided in a safe manner," Dr. Paul Van Look, director of the WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research, told the newspaper. "And the opposite is also true: where it is illegal, it is likely to be unsafe, performed under unsafe conditions by poorly trained providers."

In Uganda, where abortion is illegal, the estimated abortion rate was 54 per 1,000 women in 2003 -- more than twice the rate in the United States. Western Europe, which has legal abortion and widely available contraception, had the lowest rate with 12 per 1,000.

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