

# New Zealand women suffer long delays for abortions

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Women in New Zealand wait an average of 25 days to get a termination of pregnancy, from the date of their first visit to the doctor. Researchers writing in BioMed Central's open access journal *Reproductive Health* studied the timeliness of services provided at nine New Zealand clinics, finding that efforts need to be made by clinics and referring doctors to reduce the waiting times.

Martha Silva worked with a team of researchers from the University of Auckland to carry out the research. She said, "Although termination is a safe procedure when conducted under hygienic conditions by a trained provider, the risk for clinical complications increases with [gestational age](#). We found that more than fifty percent of women seeking termination of pregnancy services in participating clinics terminated their pregnancy on or after the tenth week of [pregnancy](#), on average waiting twenty five days between the first time they sought care with a referring doctor until the day of their termination".

The clinics participating in the study also gave women an anonymous questionnaire about their experience. When asked what they thought about the time they had waited to get their termination, 38% thought they had waited too long and would have wanted to get the procedure done sooner, 15% thought it had been too long but they did not mind waiting, almost 40% said the time they waited was just right, and 2.9% thought the timing had been too quick.

According to Silva, "This is the first large scale study of termination

services conducted in New Zealand and highlights the need for a closer attention to women's experiences while accessing these services. To avoid further inequities in service, best practices must be identified to ensure that all clinics, regardless of whether within the public or private sector, can minimize the amount of time women have to wait for a procedure".

**More information:** Ladies in waiting: the timeliness of first trimester pregnancy termination services in New Zealand, Martha Silva, Rob McNeill and Toni Ashton, Reproductive Health (in press), [www.reproductive-health-journal.com/](http://www.reproductive-health-journal.com/)

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