

One year after legalization, 6,676 abortions in Uruguay

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Tiny Uruguay, one of the few Latin American countries to have legalized abortion, saw 6,676 procedures in its first year allowing the practice, authorities said Monday.

The number amounts to nine out of every 1,000 women age 15 to 44 having had the free procedure, Deputy Public Health Minister Leonel Briozzo said.

The statistic includes abortions that occurred from December 2012 to November 2013 in the largely rural but well-educated country of 3.3 million people.

That rate compares to 15.2 abortions per 1,000 women in Canada in 2003; 24.2 in China in 1998; and 24.8 in Cuba in 2004, according to UN data.

Leftist President Jose Mujica, a 78-year-old doctor by training, backed the change, which was approved in October 2012.

It allows women to have an [abortion](#) in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and first 14 weeks when the mother's health is at risk, a fetus has malformations or the pregnancy was due to rape.

Women seeking the procedure receive counseling on risks and alternatives including adoption, and then have five days to make a decision.

Among Latin American countries, Cuba is the only other to have legalized abortion. Guyana, a former British colony, and French Guiana, an overseas department of France, also allow abortion.

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