

Profiling abortions in low- and middle-income countries

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Multiple factors including a women's age, marriage status, education and how many living children she has are associated with pregnancy termination in low- and middle-income countries, according to a new

study published this week in the open-access journal *PLOS Global Public Health* by Djibril Ba of Penn State College of Medicine, U.S., and colleagues.

In low- and [middle-income countries](#) (LMICs), a woman's decision to terminate a pregnancy is often impacted by a patriarchal structure of society, restrictive [abortion](#) laws, cultural and [religious beliefs](#) and [economic factors](#). About 45% of all abortions are considered unsafe; of those, 97% take place in LMICs. To reduce these unsafe abortions, it is crucial to fully understand the factors associated with the prevalence of [pregnancy termination](#).

In the new study, the researchers used data on more than 1.2 million women aged 15–49 who participated in the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). The women were from 36 LMICs across Africa and Asia and answered the question "Have you ever had a pregnancy terminated?" in addition to providing other health and sociodemographic data.

The average pooled weighted prevalence of pregnancy termination across the entire study was 13.3% (95% CI 13.2%–13.4%), ranging from a low of 7.8% in Namibia to 33.4% in Pakistan. Overall, being married had the strongest association with pregnancy termination (adjusted OR 2.94, 95%CI 2.84–3.05, p

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