

# A study in the Australian state of Victoria finds overall decrease in abortion rates

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La Trobe University researchers have credited new contraceptive methods, such as long-acting reversible contraceptives, for the overall decrease in abortion rates among child-bearing women in Victoria,

despite regional and rural areas witnessing an increase. These and other findings are reported in the [Medical Journal of Australia](#).

Led by Dr. Kristina Edvardsson, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the study recorded more than 766,000 births in Victoria between 2010 and 2019.

The data revealed the proportion of women who reported abortions declined, primarily among women in major cities, from 12.5% in 2010 to 11.6% in 2019.

Melbourne and Geelong recorded a larger decline in [abortion rates](#), of 12.9% to 11%, while in regional, rural and remote areas, the age-adjusted rate of women increased from 10.6 to 13%.

Dr. Edvardsson said less access to long-acting reversible contraceptive options in Australia could be driving these differing trends.

"The failure rate of oral contraception, known as the pill, is about 7%, however the failure rate with long-acting reversible contraceptive options is much lower and found to be 99% effective," Dr. Edvardsson said.

"The increase in regional and remote areas coincides with the introduction of medical abortion in Australia and we think that may be linked to the increased availability of abortion care in those areas."

While data revealed the abortion rate was particularly low among most groups of [women](#) born overseas, researchers say it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.

"There are several factors which may be contributing to this decline, such as country of origin rates or underreporting due to stigma, religious

and legal status of abortion in origin countries, and English proficiency in communication with health care providers," Dr. Edvardsson said.

Researchers conclude the complex interplay between contraceptive use, [unintended pregnancy](#) and induced abortion requires further exploration by remoteness of residence.

"There is no routinely collected data on abortions, so there is some uncertainty associated with underreporting which may be significantly linked to stigma," Dr. Edvardsson said.

**More information:** Kristina Edvardsson et al, The prevalence of and factors associated with prior induced abortion among women who gave birth in Victoria, 2010–2019, *Medical Journal of Australia* (2024). [DOI: 10.5694/mja2.52202](#)

Provided by La Trobe University

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