

No decline in US abortion rate

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The number of abortions in the United States stayed at about the same level in 2008 as three years earlier, leveling off after a long period of decline, a survey said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile the percentage of abortions that took place via drugs approved by the government in 2000 rose from 14 to 17 percent of all such procedures, according to data released by the Guttmacher Institute.

The total number of abortions in the United States in 2008 was 1.21 million, about the same as in 2005, when the institute issued its most recent report.

The 2008 rate of 19.6 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44 closely matches the 2005 rate of 19.4 abortions.

However researchers noted that the current levels are far below the peak in 1981 of 29.3 abortions per thousand women.

Karen Pazol of the Centers of Disease Control said government surveys of 2006 data released in 2009 showed similar results, "an interruption of the long-term decline."

However since the CDC does not have data for 2007 or 2008 she "can't predict whether it's a short-term change or a interruption of a long-term decline."

A combination of pills containing mifepristone and misoprostol, known

as early medication [abortion](#), rose slightly compared to 2005.

The option is available in 59 percent of the nation's abortion clinics, the Guttmacher Institute said.

Meanwhile, abortion providers reported an increase in harassment: 89 percent compared to 82 percent in 2000.

Picketing was the most common form of harassment, reported by 55 percent of providers, followed by picketing combined with blocking patient access to facilities (21 percent), the institute said.

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