

Health

Termination of pregnancy

The first survey of patients discharged from hospitals for abortion was performed by ISTAT in 1956. In compliance with Law no. 194/1978 on induced abortion, in 1979 ISTAT introduced two new surveys, one on spontaneous abortions (miscarriages) and one on induced abortions.

The survey for spontaneous abortions covers only the cases in which admission to public or private hospitals was necessary. Spontaneous abortions where admission was not necessary, for example if medical intervention was not required or only out-patient care was received, were not included in the survey.

The statistical survey on hospital discharges for spontaneous abortion involved two information processes: a monthly collection of provisional data (ISTAT form D.14) relating to the overall number of discharges for spontaneous abortion in each month for each hospital, and an annual collection performed through the ISTAT D.11 form. This is an individual and anonymous form containing information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the woman (date of birth, place of birth and residence, citizenship, civil status, qualification, etc.), her reproductive history (previous pregnancies, etc.), the miscarriage and the admission (place, cause, type of intervention, etc.).

The survey on induced abortions also relies on two information sources. The first is managed by the National Institute of Health (ISS) through a monitoring system based on aggregate figures communicated on a quarterly basis from Regional authorities relating to the overall number of induced abortions performed each month in each region or independent province. These figures are transmitted to ISTAT by the ISS. The second information source is managed directly by ISTAT on an annual basis through the individual declaration of induced abortion form (ISTAT D.12), which must be filled out by the doctor who performs the operation. The form, like that for spontaneous abortions, contains information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the woman, her reproductive history and the abortion (date, issue of certification, urgency, place and type of operation, etc.).

The results of these surveys (preliminary monthly data) were published in the Monthly Statistics Bulletin up until March 2011, while from April 2011 onwards they are published in the *online* Monthly Statistics Bulletin; the final annual data are presented on the ISTAT website. The Institute usually publishes the results of these surveys in the Italian Statistical Yearbook and in the national healthcare information system known as "[Health for All - Italia](#)".

Warnings for time series comparisons

The survey on induced abortions, started following Law no. 194/1978, also had an impact on the information available on the number of spontaneous abortions, which have fallen considerably since 1979.