

Results from the Medical Abortion survey, 8 October 2008 (Acceptability and attitudes towards taking the 2nd pill at home)

Methodology

All clients coming to MSI centres in the UK (x) for early medical abortion services were invited to participate in the survey at the time of their initial consultation. With consent, they were told someone from the MSI Call Centre would telephone them for a short interview approximately one week following them taking the second abortion pill.

A total of 184 clients agreed to participate in the survey, and a total of 134 interviews were completed in the time frame.

Survey period: 8 - 26 September 2008

Demographics

Age	%	N	Marital status	%	N
15-19	12.7	17	Married	16.4	22
20-24	23.9	32	Single	32.8	44
25-29	30.6	41	Single, with partner	46.3	62
30-34	17.6	24	Missing	4.5	6
35-39	7.5	10	Total	100.0	134
40-44	5.2	7			
Missing	2.2	3			
Total	100.0	134			

Q1. Why did you choose medical abortion? (multiple answers possible)

Reason	%	N
More convenient / easier	31.3	42
Not a surgical procedure	32.1	43
Less invasive method	25.4	34
Early in pregnancy	21.6	29
Feels more natural	17.2	23
Perceived less risky	9.7	13
Recommended by GP	4.5	7
Cost	1.5	2
Recommended by a friend	0.7	1
Don't know	1.5	2
No Response	0.7	1

Q2a. How satisfied were you with taking the pills (Scale 1-4)

Response scale	%	N
1. Very dissatisfied	6.0	8
2. Dissatisfied	6.0	8
3. Neither dissatisfied not satisfied	16.4	22
4. Satisfied	26.9	36
5. Very satisfied	43.3	58
No response	1.5	2
Total	98.5	132
	100.0	134

Average score = 3.97, indicates that clients were more likely to be satisfied with their experience of taking the tablets

Q2b. How satisfied were you with having two visits to the clinic?

Response scale	%	N
1. Very dissatisfied	29.1	39
2. Dissatisfied	29.9	40
3. Neither dissatisfied not satisfied	18.7	25
4. Satisfied	9.7	13
5. Very satisfied	10.4	14
No response	2.2	3
Total	97.8	131
	100.0	134

Average score = 2.41, indicate that clients were more likely to feel dissatisfied with having to take two visits

Q3. Would recommend MA to other women

	%	N
Yes	88.7	118
No	6.8	9
Don't know	4.5	7
	100.00	134

Q4. How confident would you be to take the second pill at home?

Response scale	%	N
1. Not all confident	2.2	3
2. Not confident	3.0	4
3. Neither confident nor not confident	3.0	4
4. Confident	14.9	20
5. Very confident	76.1	102
No response	0.7	1
Total	99.3	133
	100.0	134

Average score = 4.61 indicates that clients were more likely to report they are very confident to take the second pill at home.

Q5. Type of support that should be available to women if they could take the second pill at home.

Reason	%	N
Access to a nurse on a 24 hour hotline service	50.0	67
A partner / guardian present at home	46.3	62
Access to a general 24 hour hotline service	22.4	30
Printed information about MA (booklet etc)	16.4	22
Follow up call from centre	7.4	10
More information at the centre	5.2	7
GP call out service	3.7	5
Internet (Bold Chat)	3.0	4
Close distance to hospital	2.2	3
Don't know	3.0	4
No Response	3.0	4

Q6. Reasons why women would not choose to take the second pill at home?

Reason	%	N
There is not reason	27.6	37
Limited / no support at home	40.3	54
Misuse of 2 nd tablet / forget to take it	10.4	14
Change mind about abortion	7.5	10
Do not want anyone to know at home	6.7	9
Existing medical problem	2.2	3

Clients comments

Highlighting the inconvenience of 2 visits to MSI – time, time off work, childcare etc

I was well informed, so I felt it would not have been a problem taking the 2nd pills at home. It was very inconvenient having to arrange two visits around my husbands work and childcare

Its very inconvenient for women to make 2 visits with time off work etc. It is completely unnecessary to make 2 journeys, when you can just be at home

I was a lot of effort travelling the 2nd time. I had problems with traffic, getting time off work etc, she said it would have fitted in with her life better to stay at home

If the 2nd dose was taken at home wait times would reduce. I was very unhappy with the wait time between seeing GP and appointment in the centre

I was told I couldn't drive home so had to get my friend to take time off work to drive me, which was very inconvenient

I fully support taking 2nd pill at home, - it's a wasted journey. All is explained at the first visit anyway, and you should be able to take 2nd tablet at home.

I think for some women with a family and busy lifestyle coming twice to the clinic would be extremely inconvenient

This [to have an abortion] was a very difficult decision for me and my partner. The main thing I wanted was to have my partner with me for support and was glad this was an option with the abortion pill. However, as stated previously, the side effects happened very quickly and I had to experience them in public, which was very embarrassing. I think to be able to take the 2nd pills home would help avoid this situation. Every woman would feel most comfortable in her own environment

I strongly supports this campaign. I found the 1st visit fine, however due to the journey back home taking one hour, after the second tablets I wasn't expecting to go through very strong side effects in the car. I just think this is pointless, as I left so quickly after taking them. It all happens outside the clinic anyway. I would have preferred to stay at home and avoid long journeys

Referring to access and distance to centre for medical abortion services

I was able to take the abortion pill because I live close to the clinic. I would not have able to have come in twice otherwise

I lost my pregnancy on the train on the way home, as I had to travel four hours after taking second tablet

Second visit increasing anticipation and feeling of guilt

... the process was easier than I thought it would be as I was expecting more pain and bleeding. I left the centre straight after taking the 2nd dose but experienced sickness and general feeling of illness within 20mins on the way home. I would have felt so much more comfortable staying at home. The 2nd visit increased my feeling of anticipation, and I knew what was going on and keep thinking about it during my 2nd visit

I felt judged whilst in the waiting room by other clients and did not want to be around other clients for longer than necessary. One visit to the centre would have felt much more comfortable as I could have got it over and done with

If women were allowed to experience the miscarriage at home it would be much less traumatic. If I had to have a surgical procedure I don't think I would have coped emotionally. I just felt I was having a heavy period and that helped avoid guilt. I think this is a great option and women should be entitled to do this at home and not travel unnecessarily

Being alone to deal with travelling, feeling sick and emotional vulnerable

I was violently sick on the way home which I found very traumatic. I would have been able to deal with this [abortion] so much better if I had been at home while this was happening

I started feeling sick within 15mins after taking the second dose. I ended up vomiting out of the window on the motorway on the way home, which was horrible and very embarrassing. I support the choice to take the pill home

I can not think of any reason why women would choose to travel back to the clinic, a lot of women are sick and feel ill on the journey back home often alone in a taxi

More comfortable to take at home. What if something happens on the way home from clinic?

Emphasising the choice to stay at home or have 2nd visit

(quoted by interviewer) "X found the abortion very painful and was on her own during the process. She believes women should have the choice to take the pills home or to stay in the centre. If she had to go through the process again she would want to stay in the centre with nurses/doctors"

Everybody as individuals should be allowed the decision to have the 2nd pills at home

Good service, very quick. Service that I would recommend to others in this situation. This client lived close to the centre but thinks it's important to have the one visit service for others

Women should be made to feel confident enough to take the 2nd dose at home during the 1st visit as they are more likely to want to be at home in a familiar environment. Although I managed well enough at home with my family around and glad I didn't experience any symptoms on the way home, I am aware that some women do. I think you can prepare for this better at home.

I would recommend clients take the pills home. I would have like to have had the choice at least. Some women may not have the support at home and may want to stay in the clinic.

Client would prefer to have taken 2nd tablet at home would have been easier. Maybe younger girls should not take tablets at home

Maybe if client is young (17-18) and wants to be discrete, i.e. if family do not know then she should go to the centre

All about choice, to make it easier and to make the right decision