IMPACT OF ABORTION LAW ON ABORTION MORTALITY WITH REFERENCE TO ILLEGAL ABORTIONS

by

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Abortion is reported to be the single major cause of maternal deaths in our country. Hence it is expected that a parallel decline in maternal deaths due to illegal abortions will be observed along with the definite decline in the maternal mortality rate of our country, especially after the introduction of new abortion law in 1972. However many recent reports (Patubidri and Kotwani, 1979) observed that a break-through which was expected and hoped for with the enactment of new abortion law, has failed to show any appreciable impact on the maternal mortality following septic abortions or on the septic abortion itself. However, India is a vast country, the socio-economic conditions differ from State to State and it is well known that socio-economic conditions bear great influence on illegal abortions and on its consequences. Thus the impact of abortion law may be different in different regions. The present study was therefore undertaken to compare the maternal deaths following illegal abortions during 3 years periods, each triennium representing the pre, early and mid enactment period respectively.

Material and Methods

Postabortal maternal deaths occurred during 1969 to 1977 in Eden Hospitals, Calcutta were analysed and tabulated for comparison amongst these 3 triennium. The diagnosis and cause of deaths were based on clinical findings. Deaths following illegal abortions were analysed in details.

Observations

Table I shows that there is a gradual fall in the total numbers of confinements during the later 2 three years' periods than the earlier one. The number of total abortions also decreased during 75-77 than the 2 earlier periods. Post abortal maternal deaths also decreased during 75-77 than the 2 earlier periods. However, maternal deaths following M.T.P. increased during 75-77 probably due to gradual increase in the number cases.

Table II shows that the trend of admissions of total abortion cases showed a decline during 75-77. However, the number of cases of illegal abortions (which were mostly septic, few came with haemorrhage) remained almost constant during these 3 triennium, though the maternal deaths, following illegal abortions decreased significantly during 75-77.

Age and Parity Distributions Amongst Deaths Following Illegal Abortions

During 75-77 amongst 32 deaths, 5 were below 20, 20 (62%) were in between 21-30 years, 5 were in between 31-40 years and 2 were above 40 years. During 72-75, 23 (56%) were in between 21-30 years, 7 were below 20 years, 6 were in-between 31-40 years and 5 were above 40 years.

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Accepted for publication os 10-1-80.