

Implementation of the 2019 ministerial order on safe abortion provision in Rwanda: a situational analysis abstract

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Background

- Abortion is safe when carried out using a method recommended by WHO, appropriate to the pregnancy duration and by someone with the necessary skills
- Unsafe abortion remains one of the top five causes of maternal mortality worldwide. Each year, around 220 women die for every 100000 unsafe abortions in developing regions due to barriers to accessing safe and respectful abortion services, including restrictive laws, health system and community factors¹.
- In Rwanda, a 2018 law amendment set exemptions for abortion provision and removed the requirement for a court order and second doctor permission which came into effect with Ministerial Order No.002/MoH/2019 on 8 April 2019.

Making Abortion Safe

RCOG's global initiative to advocate for women's health

Study Design

A mixed-method design to capture quantitative data related to health system infrastructure, healthcare provider knowledge and attitudes, supplemented by qualitative data from healthcare providers on their lived-reality of implementing the Order.

Objective:

The aim of this study is to assess the successes and challenges of the implementation of this 2019 ministerial order and identify recommendations to improve access to safe abortion services.

Sample:

5 public health facilities providing safe abortion services randomly selected from each of the 4 provinces and Kigali City, Rwanda, and 2 Faith-Based health facilities purposefully selected

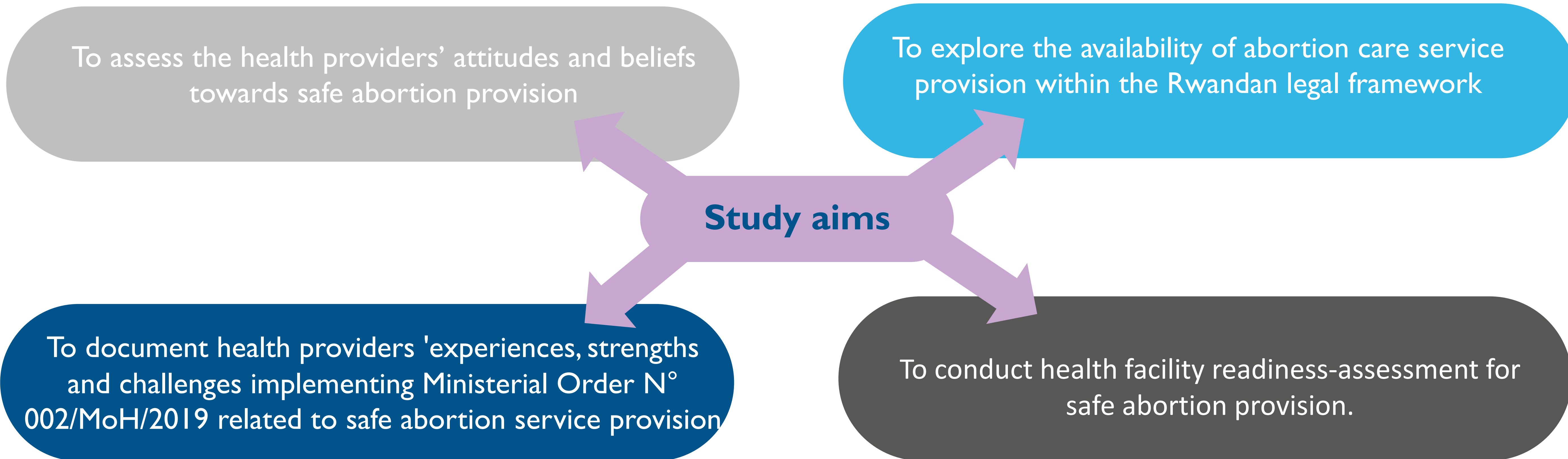
Methodology:

Quantitative data collection will include:

- Structured questionnaire², assessing health facility readiness to implement the order, including availability and appropriateness of human resources, infrastructure and supplies related to safe abortion provision.
- A structured questionnaire on healthcare professional (HCP) views on the strengths, challenges and recommendations for implementation of the order
- An adoption of the Ipas “Stigmatizing Attitudes, Beliefs and Actions scale (SABAs Scoring)”² to measure HCP attitudes to abortion provision.

Qualitative data will be collected through in-depth interviews with key informants to explore awareness, views, and challenges related to implementation of the order since its release in 2019.

Data analysis will include descriptive statistics, univariate and multivariate analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data



Conclusions

- Since the Ministerial Order came into effect there has been limited research on its implementation across Rwanda
- This research will provide a comprehensive review of health facility readiness and HCP views and attitudes, both of which are fundamental for the changes in the Order to translate into increased access to safe abortion services.
- It is anticipated that findings from this research will lead to the development of key recommendations for the Ministry of Health.

References

¹WHO. Abortion. World Health Organization. Published 2021. Accessed January 26, 2023. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>

²E. A. Sully *et al.*, “Abortion in Zimbabwe: A national study of the incidence of induced abortion, unintended pregnancy and post-abortion care in 2016,” *PLoS One*, vol. 13, no. 10, pp. 1–18, 2018, doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0205239

³Ipas, “The stigmatizing attitudes, beliefs and actions scale.” 2013. Accessed: Sep. 06, 2022. [Online]. Available: www.ipas.org