



Study of Medical termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks of gestation
Dr. Nidhi Kurkal; MS (Assistant Professor), Dr. Vilas Kurude; MD (Associate Professor), Dr. Aayushi Jain; MBBS (Junior Resident)
Department of OBGY, Grant Government Medical College & Sir JJ Hospital, Mumbai

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, was a landmark legislation in India which aimed to regulate the conditions under which a pregnancy could be terminated.
- After the Amendment in 2021, the law permits termination of pregnancy upto 20 weeks liberally. In select cases including to alleviate the mental anguish of the woman, termination can be done upto 24 weeks
- For pregnancies beyond 24 weeks of gestation with fetal anomalies, a multi disciplinary panel consisting of an obstetrician, paediatrician, anaesthesiologist, radiologist and other concerned specialists are formed in designated district hospitals, who are empowered to grant the termination of pregnancy. In all other conditions including rape, the patient may approach the judiciary who then determine the validity of individual cases for termination of pregnancy.
- The liberalization of MTP law is a matter of controversy and in some countries there is a challenge to already existing liberal laws. In India, like Finland, MTP laws are liberal till 20 weeks of gestation. UK, Netherlands and Czech Republic is liberal upto 24 weeks of gestation. Countries like Austria, Germany, Denmark, New Zealand have no limit of gestational age for MTP.
- The MTP act is a crucial step in advancing female rights and enabling them to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

Methods- A Retrospective evaluative study conducted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology with a state appointed medical board in the institute

The study included all patients who underwent medical termination beyond 24 weeks from August 2019 to December 2024. Approval was granted by the Institutional Ethics Committee. All patient data remained strictly confidential.

Inclusion criteria- All patients who underwent MTP at our institute beyond 24 weeks of gestation in the stipulated time.

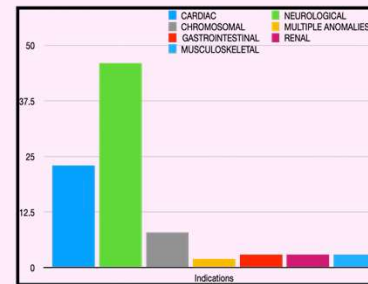
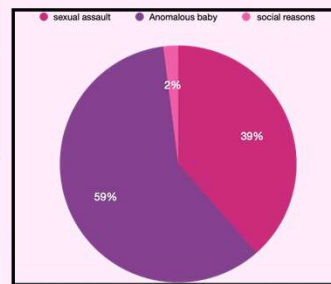
Exclusion criteria- Pregnancy below 24 weeks of gestation and pregnancies terminated for maternal health.

AGE	NUMBER OF PATIENTS	PERCENTAGE
<18 years	56	37.5%
18-21 years	15	10.7%
22-25 years	19	12.5%
26-30 years	37	25%
31-35 years	11	7.4%
>35 years	10	6.7%

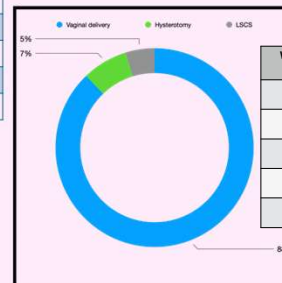
GESTATIONAL AGE	NO. OF PATIENTS	PERCENTAGE
24- 25+6 WEEKS	40	27.6%
26- 27+6 WEEKS	69	46.4%
28- 29+6 WEEKS	29	19.6%
30- 31+6 WEEKS	2	1.7%
>32 WEEKS	8	5.3%

GRAVIDA SCORE	NUMBER OF PATIENTS	PERCENTAGE
Primigravida	95	64.2%
2nd gravida	24	16%
3rd gravida	21	14.2%
4th gravida	5	3.5%
>4th gravida	3	1.78%

In our study, the most common indication was noted to be pregnancy borne out of sexual assault including statutory rape (39.2%), followed by neurological anomalies (30.3%), cardiac anomalies (16%), chromosomal anomalies (6.3%). Renal anomalies, musculoskeletal anomalies, gastrointestinal anomalies and unmarried females each contributed a total of 1.7% and multiple anomalies were 1.3% of total.



OUTCOMES	NO. OF PATIENTS	PERCENTAGE
Neonatal death	69	46.4%
Macerated still birth	5	3.5%
Fresh still birth	69	46.4%
Abortus	5	3.5%



WEIGHT IN GRAMS	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<500	5	3.5%
500-999	88	58.9%
1000-1499	42	28.5%
1500-1999	11	7.1%
>2000	2	1.7%

DISCUSSION

Out of 148 females, most common age group were females less than 18 years old (37.5%) followed by 25% between 26-30 years. The incidence of MTP beyond 24 weeks reduced with each gravida score. Most common gestational age at which MTP was done was 26-27+6 weeks which was 46.4%.

Conclusion

- The MTP Act's primary objective is to safeguard the health of women.
- Legalizing MTP, while also inserting safeguards so that MTP does not become detrimental to their health, this act also established safe locations where MTP can be performed which is not restricted to government run setups
- The MTP act inspite of easing down abortion laws, also has its grey areas.
- Termination of pregnancy has been granted by the judiciary even upto 33 weeks gestation for a minor girl even without any obvious anomalies.
- Proper counselling and supportive measures for these minors and survivors of sexual assault may give a better prognosis for the baby so born and a better outcome when placed for adoption if so desired.
- Adequate preconceptional counselling and folic acid, early antenatal registration and sex education among teenagers could have helped preventing termination of pregnancies at this advanced gestational age.
- Emphasis on timely diagnosis of congenital anomalies in early anomaly scans to avoid late termination.
- Tragically, where most countries are becoming more liberal with their MTP laws, countries like Poland and The United States of America are regressing with their laws with an almost no tolerance policy against abortions at any gestational age.
- This not only strips women off of their own rights but also leads them to use unsafe practices leading to more health complications
- The MTP amendment act acknowledges the autonomy of women in making informed decisions about their reproductive health. It recognises that women should not be forced to continue unwanted pregnancies especially before viability

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