

A survey of the knowledge, attitude and practice of induced abortion among nurses in Kisii district, Kenya.

Abstract:

A cross-sectional study was carried out in Kisii District in the western part of Kenya between April 1 and April 28, 1991, with the objectives of ascertaining the attitude of nurses towards induced abortion, patients, and their involvement in abortion. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. All nurses present at the various institutions were recruited. A total of 218 nurses were recruited into the study. 75-83% were married, female nurses younger than 40, and therefore in the reproductive age group. 134 (61.5%) nurses were Protestant and 51% worked in the government district hospital. The nurses displayed a deficient knowledge of all aspects of induced abortion. Among clinically safe methods only intraamniotic saline instillation and dilation and curettage were mentioned by 4% and 11%, respectively. This deficiency in knowledge may be explained by the fact that most nurses work in the government hospitals, where induced abortion is not a routine procedure. Only 26-28% of the nurses thought it was safe to induce abortion at 1 and 2 months of gestation. 31-43% either did not know or were uncertain. Abortion is illegal in Kenya except when the life of the mother is in danger. Most nurses seemed to favor the law. A previous study in Nairobi revealed that only 38% of the nurses favored abortion on demand under a liberalized abortion law. 24 (11%) of nurses admitted to have induced abortion before. Their knowledge of induced abortion needs to be improved in order to prevent an increase in mortality and morbidity associated with improperly performed abortions