

CASE RECORDS
AND
COMMENTARIES
FOR THE
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LONG GYNAECOLOGICAL COMMENTARYA 10 YEAR REVIEW OF MORTALITY DUE TO ABORTION IN KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL (1974 - 1983)SUMMARY:

A retrospective analysis of 95 abortion deaths which occurred in Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) between 1974 and 1983 is presented. 80% of the 83 induced abortion deaths were induced or likely to be induced and 97.4% of those induced died of septic abortion and its complications. The average abortion death rate over the 10 year period was high, 3 abortion deaths per 1000 abortion admissions. The study confirms that the adolescent girls, the unmarried, poor and unemployed women are mostly affected. The strain on the hospital resources and hence the taxpayer has been cited. The mean hospital stay, that is the mean admission - death interval was 12 days.

INTRODUCTION:

From 30 to 50 million abortions are estimated to take place annually throughout the world and about half of them are illegal; more than half take place in the developing countries (1). Although the real status of illegal abortion is not known, it is generally accepted that as the underdeveloped communities becomes involved in the transitional process of development, an increasing incidence of induced abortion occur (2). In most of the African Countries abortion is illegal, but the number of abortions is believed to be very high in the expanding urban areas (3,4,5). The increase in the number of women hospitalized for abortion complications indicates a real increase in the incidence of abortion (6). Today new attention is focusing on the health problem of women. A major cause of death among women of reproductive age in developing countries is illegally induced abortion. It is estimated that illegal abortion in developing countries kills 1 of every 1000 to 2000 cases induced (1). Some developing countries have realized the increasing incidence and the serious hazards of illegal abortion. In this connection several research and conferences have sprung up to define the problem and attempt to reduce the morbidity and mortality of illegal abortion. A study on illegal abortions in selected African Capital Cities in 1976 looked at hospital admission records for diagnosis and estimation of the incidence of illegal abortion and the characteristics of women hospitalized for abortion complications by types, age, marital status, parity, living children, gestational age, use of