The Characteristics of Women Seeking Funding from the DC Abortion Fund

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Introduction

There is a gap in abortion research and inconsistency in DCAF client data collection by case managers, which required the author to conduct research prospectively, rather than retrospectively. There is research available regarding abortion providers, but very little about abortion patients. There is an opportunity for the author's research to add knowledge to this subject that could aid other abortion researchers in designing future studies, and it can serve to substantiate DCAF's claim for program expansion and verify they are reaching their organization's goal of making choice affordable for low-income women.

Objectives

1. Describe the population that DCAF supports by age, race and ethnicity, poverty, educational attainment, union status, contraceptive method used, referral source, and number of prior pregnancies.

1. Determine if there is a statistical difference in demographics between the three states DCAF provides abortion funding in; and then between 1st and 2nd trimester pregnancies.

1. Determine if there is a statistical difference in demographics between 1st and 2nd trimester pregnancies.

Material and Methods

Phone interviews were conducted in January and February 2013 with each woman who contacted DCAF for financial assistance (n=150). The interview questions were guided by The Guttmacher Institute's 2008 National Patient Survey, which uses a design, questionnaire and fieldwork procedure similar to their earlier studies that collected information from women obtaining abortions in 1987, 1994-1995 and 2000-2001.[1]
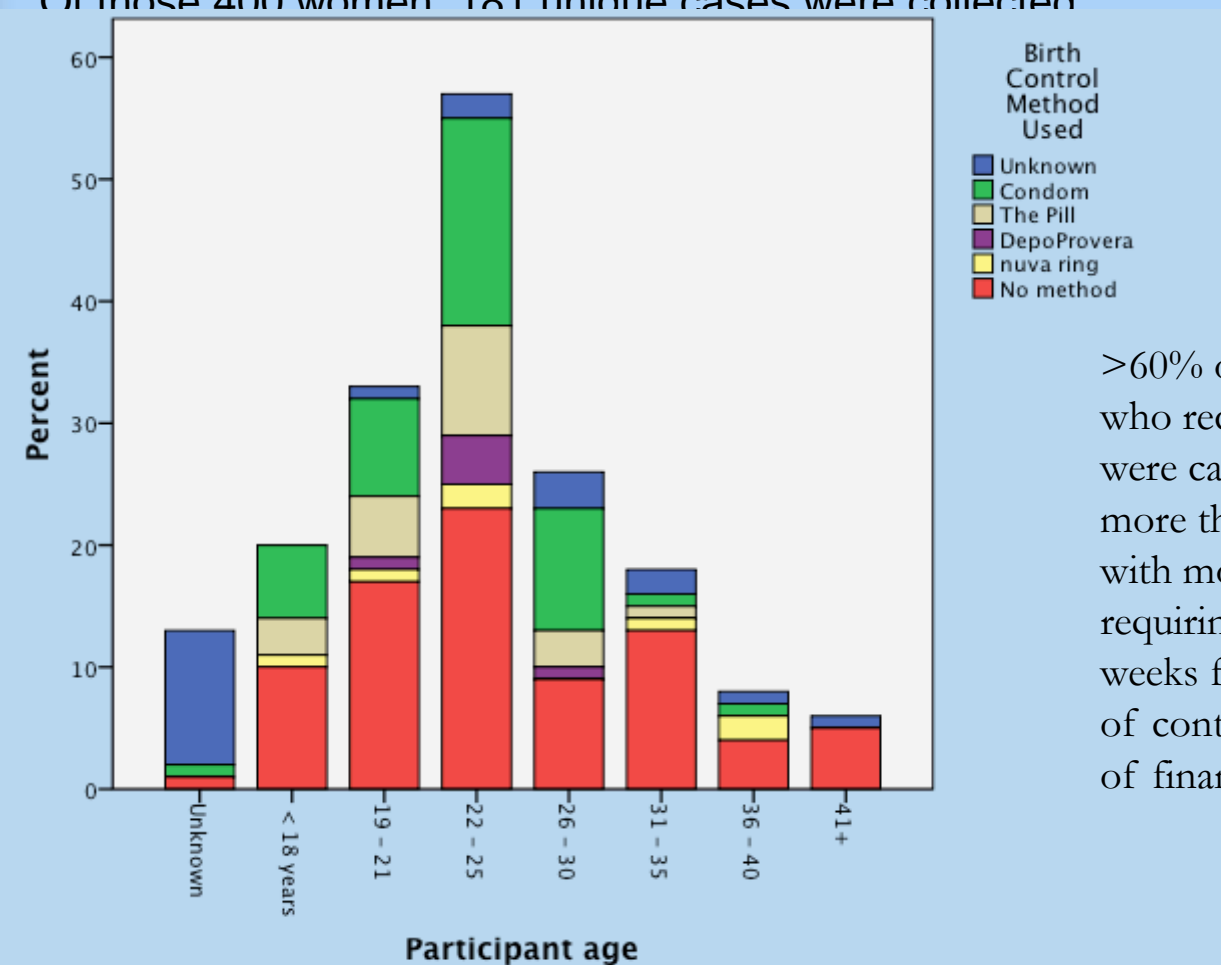
This survey includes information about core demographics that includes age, race and ethnicity, marital status, geographic location by state or zip code, educational attainment, insurance status, income and financial resources, number of children and persons living in the household, and whether a contraceptive method was used or not.

The information was collected and stored in a HIPAA compliant database, Cryptoheaven, and stripped of personal identifying information, including phone number and name.

Results

Between January and March 2013 approximately 400 women contacted DCAF.
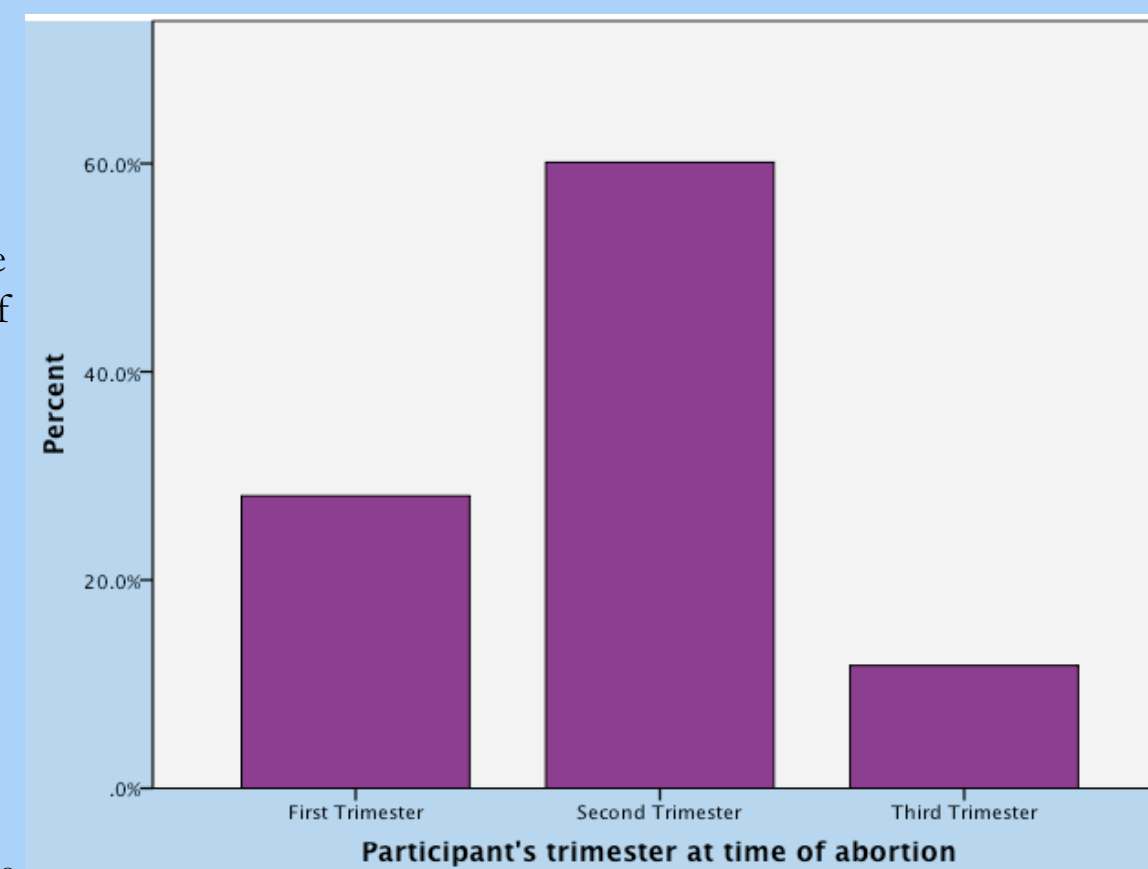Of those 400 women, 181 unique cases were collected.

>60% of the patients who received funding were case managed for more than a week, with more than 30% requiring 2 – 4+ weeks from first time of contact to receipt of financial pledge

DCAF is serving those women who are most at risk at experiencing an unplanned pregnancy & unable to afford the cost of an abortion when that is their choice.

However, DCAF's clients fall outside of the national average of weeks pregnant at time of abortion.
More research is needed to determine the reasons for this.

Reference
1. Jones RK, Finer LB, Singh S. Characteristics of U.S. abortion patients, 2008. New York: Guttmacher Institute. 2010.