

## **Abortion: how do men react to it?**

M. Maragno (1), P. Battaglia (1), C. Rossi (1), S. Chiodi (1), G.B. Ravera (2)

(1) Associazione Italiana Educazione Demografica di Albenga, Savona, Italy

(2) Dipartimento di Scienze della Salute, Sez. Biostatistica, Università di Genova.

Italy

**Objectives:** To investigate behaviour and feelings of the partners of women who have requested abortion. A review of existing literature on this subject suggests that very little research has been done on men's psychological reactions to their partner's abortion.

**Methods:** The study was carried out on two separate occasions. The first was in the Associazione Italiana Educazione Demografica (A.I.E.D.) of Genova (1994-1995), the second involved 13 Italian women's health centres (1999-2000). A questionnaire designed to address male concerns, was given to a random sample of men accompanying partners who had requested legal abortion. Chi Square and Fisher exact test were used for statistical analysis.

**Results:** 169 men aged 19-47 (average 33) completed a questionnaire. Most of them had a stable job (75%) and relationship (86%), but only 23% had had children. The most frequently used method of contraception by these couples was the coitus interruptus and 67% of subjects referred needed contraceptive counselling. Although the choice of abortion was taken by both partners (76%), only 37% of men thought the relationship would improve after the abortion. In 69% of subjects the event considered was associated with depression.

**Conclusion:** This study suggests 1) some men need to know more about contraceptives; 2) there exists a whole masculine world of feelings about abortion of which not enough is known; 3) the family planning services should make an effort to help the couple to improve paternity awareness.