Globally the Highest Percentage of Unsafe Abortions Still Occur in Africa and Latin America.
Abortion in Ghana

- Abortion law is relatively liberal
  - Rape, incest or the “defilement of a female idiot”
  - If the life or health of the woman is in danger
  - Or if there is risk of fetal abnormality
Abortion in Ghana

• However, few women are knowledgeable about the law

• Only 3% of pregnant women and 6% of women seeking an abortion are aware of Ghana’s abortion law
Abortion in Ghana

- Unsafe abortion is common
  - Second biggest contributor to maternal death
- Postabortion care (PAC) puts severe stress on health infrastructure
- Out-of-pocket PAC costs estimated at $8.5 million per year for families
Actual Abortion Rate May Be Much Higher Than Reported

• In 2007, there were at least 15 induced abortions for every 1,000 women of reproductive age (15–44).

• However, due to stigma, actual incidence of the procedure is very likely underreported.
Research Questions

• What are the characteristics of women who have an abortion?
• What are the characteristics of women who have an unsafe abortion?
Data Sources

• 2007 Ghana Maternal Health Survey
• Includes detailed information on:
  – Women who had an abortion in the previous 5 years
  – Providers, methods, and place of abortion
  – Pregnancy history and outcomes
  – Social and demographic variables
Key Findings

• Women who are better off economically and socially are more likely to obtain an abortion

• However, economically and socially disadvantaged women are more likely to have an unsafe procedure
Women Most Likely to Obtain an Abortion

- Young adults: Aged 20–29
- Have no children
- Never-married at the time of the pregnancy
- Economically better-off
- Live in urban areas
Induced Abortion is Especially Common Among Women 20–29

% who had an abortion in previous 5 years

Source: Ghana Maternal Health Survey, 2009
Reasons Women Have Abortions

• High unmet need for contraception, leading to high levels of unintended pregnancy
• Increased desire for smaller families
• Desire to space or limit childbearing
  – Wish to pursue work or school
• Uncertainty about their partner’s financial support
Women Most Likely to Obtain an Unsafe Abortion

• Teens and women in their 20s
  – Less likely to know where to get an abortion
  – Have less access to financial resources
  – More influenced by stigma compared with older women (30+)
Women Most Likely to Obtain an Unsafe Abortion

- Poorer
- Have 3 or more children
- Do not have financial support from their partners
Policy Recommendations

• Improve access to contraceptive services to reduce unintended pregnancy and the need for abortion

• Promote access to safe, legal abortion services to the full extent of the law

• Improve knowledge of abortion law

• Make safe abortion services more affordable for poor and rural women
Policy Recommendations

• Increase the role of trained midwives in providing abortion services

• Improve the coverage and quality of postabortion care

• Educate men on their role in keeping their partners safe and healthy
Available Materials

- Presentation available from website or from Joana
- Article: “Factors Associated with Abortion-Seeking and Obtaining a Safe Abortion in Ghana”
- Facts on Abortion in Ghana
- In Brief: Abortion in Ghana

For more information, please visit www.guttmacher.org
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