Adolescent contraception and abortion-related care: a three country comparison and Malawi case study

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Adolescents in Malawi have low levels of contraceptive knowledge and use unsafe abortion for unwanted pregnancy.

Percentage of induced abortions that were "unsafe" or resulted in complications requiring medical care

- **Malawi**: 98% unsafe
- **Zambia**: 72% unsafe
- **Ethiopia**: 2% unsafe

**Unsafe methods included:**
- mixtures ofabor-vena, carnauba-wax, poisoned, bitter-plant-leaves, ferul-plant-leaves, Cerua-Cinica, alfalfed, chernias, soap, oil, antiflamer, anteflamer, antifever, soap-powder.

**METHODS**
1. Facility-based recruitment of [n=105] 10-19 year-olds seeking either safe abortion care or post-abortion care at a tertiary public sector hospital in Lilongwe.
2. Quantitative and qualitative data collected

**OUR SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently has work</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently student</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17 years</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-19 years</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/separated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preliminary findings from Malawi:**

- Many girls made multiple attempts to terminate their pregnancies before seeking care at a health facility (n = 96)
  - 1st attempt: 58% MA, 25% other medicines, 25% traditional methods
  - 2nd attempt: 10% MA, 5% other medicines, 15% traditional methods
  - 3rd attempt or above: 2% MA, 2% other medicines, 2% traditional methods

- The percentage of 15 to 18 year olds who used contraception in the past was far higher than those using it at the time they became pregnant.
- **Knowledge of EC** was low and post use of EC was non-existent.

**Thank you!**

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