

Abortions Rate In Northern Ireland

Abortion has been carried out in Northern Ireland for many years in allegedly restricted circumstances in crisis situations. For years no statistics were published. Following a Parliamentary Question in the House of Commons, statistics became available for 1996/1997 and subsequent years. The figures relate to “abortions in health service hospitals and the information is taken directly from the Hospital Inpatients System.” According to the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), the figures exclude two private hospitals/clinics, in Derry and Belfast. These, however, do not appear to be a matter of concern. The years given are not coincident with the calendar years, stretching from 1st April to 31st March the following year. The Data given by DHSS Belfast was as follows:

Type of Abortion/Year	96/97	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Missed Abortion	NA	NA	942	1057	1033	942	1059	1131	1182	1173	1096	1211	1321	1251		
Spontaneous Abortion	1716	1515	1348	1383	1443	1271	1270	1106	1077	1139	1247	1095	1019	892		
3. Medical Abortion	85	79	71	83	71	76	67	64	80	79	91	78	67	75		
4. Other/Unspecified	85*	8	8	8	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	5	0	0		
Total	1886	1602	2369	2531	2550	2291	2397	2303	2339	2391	2434	2389	2407	2218		

Note : * badly coded .

Source: DHSS Information and Analysis Unit. Figures relate to abortions in health service hospitals. Missed abortions were reported for the first time in 2004 retrospective to 1999/2000. Items 1 and 2, if correctly reported, are obviously not direct deliberate abortions. Items 3 or 4 undoubtedly could be but some could undoubtedly also cover indirect and undesired effects of treatments carried out under the Double Effect Principle.

Comment: As one would expect from the robust opposition to abortion in Northern Ireland, the number of overall abortions performed are quite low. Assuming that all spontaneous and missed abortions are correctly recorded and taking “Medical Abortions” and “Other/Unspecified” only as possible direct abortions and adding the abortions performed in England and Wales on residents of Northern Ireland we can compare NI abortions with the Republic's.