

Adolescents are at high risk for unintended pregnancy, and the age group most likely to choose abortion when faced with pregnancy. It is critical that clinicians caring for adolescents are able to counsel pregnant patients on all of their options: parenthood, adoption, temporary foster care, and abortion. Since the FDA approved mifepristone in September 2000, adolescents can opt to use medication or have an in-office procedure to end a pregnancy. Medication abortion is well tolerated and effective among adolescents.

There is no current data on the knowledge of medication abortion by adolescent medicine providers, despite the fact that these clinicians care for adolescents in a wide variety of settings and are responsible for much of adolescent reproductive health training for medical trainees. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of their knowledge, training, provision, and attitudes on reproductive healthcare, with a focus on medication abortion. Specifically, we looked at whether providers who care for adolescents had sufficient knowledge to accurately counsel adolescents around medication abortion. In addition, we wanted to better understand if adolescent medicine specialists performed better on knowledge questions, in accordance with subspecialty board requirements.

We surveyed adolescent medicine providers using an online questionnaire. Our data suggested that knowledge regarding medication abortion effectiveness, side effects, and complications was suboptimal, even among adolescent medicine fellowship trained physicians. Given that self-assessed knowledge was a poor predictor of accurate knowledge, we believe that there is a need to better educate all adolescent medicine providers on issues related to medication abortion counseling

Further analysis will examine barriers and supports to medication abortion provision by adolescent medicine providers.