Women in Catalunya who access legal and publicly funded abortion services through a public health system continue to encounter delays and difficulties while navigating the process of obtaining care. A combination of inappropriately long waiting times for eligibility, paperwork delays and errors, misinformation, and biased treatment affect women within the health system. Moreover, women report logistical obstacles and difficulties with social support, while seeking care. Women, providers, and advocates alike express a high degree of concern about austerity cuts that affect the health system, the larger economic crisis affecting the region, and current right-wing threats to the newly expanded abortion law reforms. Providers also view a growing quest for Catalunya’s full separation from Spain as a potential pathway to protecting universal health system coverage of abortion, in light of Spain’s relatively more conservative views on abortion.

Documenting health system delays and obstacles affecting access to abortion even in an optimal setting; and women’s persistent needs for social support while seeking care, this study reveals key factors in women’s experiences accessing abortion services.