Conscientious objection in the UK and Italy: a qualitative study of health providers’ perspectives on abortion

From 2011-04-04 to 2013-10-03, closed project

Objective

A qualitative study of obstetricians-gynecologists’, residents’ and medical students’ experiences and attitudes towards conscientious objection and abortion is proposed in two European countries: one in Northern Europe - the UK, and the other in Southern Europe - Italy. The main objectives are to examine how conscientious objection is experienced by these physicians and by medical students and how it affects abortion training and provision in different clinical settings and geographical areas. The study will investigate how current and future obstetricians-gynecologists’ choices regarding training and providing abortions is influenced by: 1- their cultural and religious background and beliefs; 2- their professional training and experience (including knowledge of abortion’s epidemiology, of maternal morbidity and mortality, of the Ethical Code of Medicine and of the laws regarding abortion and their experience of abortion stigma); 3- their engagement with the political, scientific and religious debate on reproductive health and rights. Conscientious objection is increasing both in the UK and in Italy, leading to a decrease in the number of abortion providers in public health services. It is not known whether and how conscientious objection is affecting other aspects of abortion services. Only a few quantitative studies on gynecologists’ experience and attitudes towards abortion have been undertaken in the UK, while no such studies have been undertaken in Italy. The present qualitative study will give an important contribution to the European scientific debate by providing new data on a topic which is relevant from an anthropological, public health and policy perspective. The Council of Europe (COE) is attempting to regulate the use of conscientious objection in Europe. This study will therefore have immediate relevance and application both from a scientific and a policy point of view.

Related information

Result In Brief

Conscientious objection in health care

Report Summaries

Final Report Summary - CONOB (Conscientious objection in the UK and Italy: a qualitative study of health providers’ perspectives on abortion)
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Subjects
Coordination and Cooperation - Social sciences and humanities

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