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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

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Article **Unintended Live Birth versus Abortion: What Factors Affect the Choices of Vietnamese Women and Couples?**

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Abstract Unintended pregnancy and abortion rates in Viet Nam are very high, exceeding the levels found in most developing countries and approaching those found in the more developed countries. This study assessed the factors associated with the choice of induced abortion as opposed to carrying unintended pregnancies to term. "Calendar" data from the 1997 Viet Nam Demographic and Health Survey II were used in the study. Bivariate and multivariate statistical methods were used to identify factors associated with decisions to terminate unintended pregnancies versus carry them to term as unintended live births. A history of menstrual regulation/abortion was the strongest predictor of a woman's decision to choose abortion. Family planning supply indicators were associated with the likelihood of unintended pregnancy, but not choice of abortion, nor were indicators of the availability of menstrual regulation/abortion services. Menstrual regulation/abortion is widely used as a means of avoiding unintended births by women and couples in Viet Nam. The evidence indicates a need for expanded and higher quality family planning services, and in particular post-abortion services, in order to reduce the prevalence of unintended pregnancy as well as repeated abortion in the country.

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