

FRANCE

Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial (MFPF)

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LEGISLATION

Law No 588, 2001

GROUNDINGS/GESTATIONAL LIMITS

Up to 12 weeks

- If the woman judges to be in a 'state of distress' because of her pregnancy.

No limit:

- If continuation of pregnancy poses a serious risk to the health of the woman
- If a strong probability exists that the expected child will suffer from a particularly severe illness recognized as incurable

REGULATIONS/CONDITIONS

- The woman must consult a doctor and minors are also required to seek advice from a social worker. If the woman still desires to terminate the pregnancy, she should renew her request in writing, no earlier than one week from the time of the first request. Should the one week waiting period cause the 12-week period of pregnancy to be exceeded, the doctor may accept the renewed request as early as two days after the initial request.
- Although minors need to have the consent of their parents or their guardian, they can obtain an exemption if they want to keep it a secret. In this case, she needs to be accompanied by an adult of her choice.
- For a second trimester abortion, 2 doctors (one ob/gyn and one doctor chosen by the woman) and a psychologist or social worker are required to review the request for abortion.
- Post abortion counseling on contraceptives should be proposed to minors.
- Conscientious objection provision permits professionals to decline involvement in procedures, but they are required to inform the patient without delay (during the first appointment at the latest) and provide referral. (Art. 2212-2,-8)
- Each public hospital medical consultant must accept the provision of the voluntary interruption of pregnancy (VIP) if this has been decided by the board of governors in order to comply with the mission of the public health services. He is entitled to refuse to practice it; however he must not oppose colleagues who do so.

METHODS

Medical abortion represents almost 50% of all performed abortions
Drug registered for medical abortion: MIFEGYNE 200 mg and GYMISA

The limit for a medical abortion is 5 to 7 weeks.

Since 2004, a medical abortion can also be performed outside hospitals, by a doctor in private practice (decree n°796, May 2002 and n° 636, July 2004). Doctors in private practice who want to perform medical abortion must have an agreement with a health institute authorized to practice abortion

Outside hospitals, medical abortion can only be performed up to 5 weeks of pregnancy. In hospitals it is possible up to 7 weeks.

COST

- The price ranges from € 190-274 (US\$ 246–354)
- A medical abortion (RU-486) costs € 257 (US\$ 332) in hospital and € 191 (US\$ 247) outside hospital (reimbursed for 70 % of the price)
- Private insurances cover the difference
- Women are reimbursed for 80% of the price. Women under 18 or women living in conditions of poverty can receive a 100% reimbursement

DISPARITY IN THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW:

- *Abortion is not performed in all hospitals*
- *Accessibility in rural areas is generally not good enough*
- *Women often cannot choose the method (medical or surgical)*
- *Different attitudes of doctors in dealing with minors who are not able to produce written parental consent*
- *Medical abortion performed outside hospitals is not yet accessible everywhere*

COMMENTS:

- *In general there are not enough beds available in hospitals, even though the situation varies from one city to the other and some abortion services are completely closed during summer*
- *Among the new generation of doctors, less and less professionals want to perform abortion*
- *Medical University curriculum does not include theory and abortion practices*
- *Hospitals tend to push women to have a medical abortion instead of surgical abortion because the costs are lower*
- *There is not enough doctors in private practice who wants to perform medical abortion*
- *Despite long term advocacy activities (since 2001) from the MA and other organizations, we are still waiting for the regulation which will permit family planning centers and health centers to perform medical abortion*