

# Unsafe abortion





# Definition

- | Abortion is the termination of pregnancy before the viability of the fetus. Currently the accepted gestational duration for viability is set at 22 weeks.
- | Abortion
  1. Spontaneous (miscarriage)
  2. Induced



# Unsafe abortion

- | Any abortion undertaken in unhygienic environment, by unskilled provider and inappropriate instrument is an unsafe induced abortion.
- | Almost all of abortion related deaths and complications are due to unsafe induced abortions.(1;2)



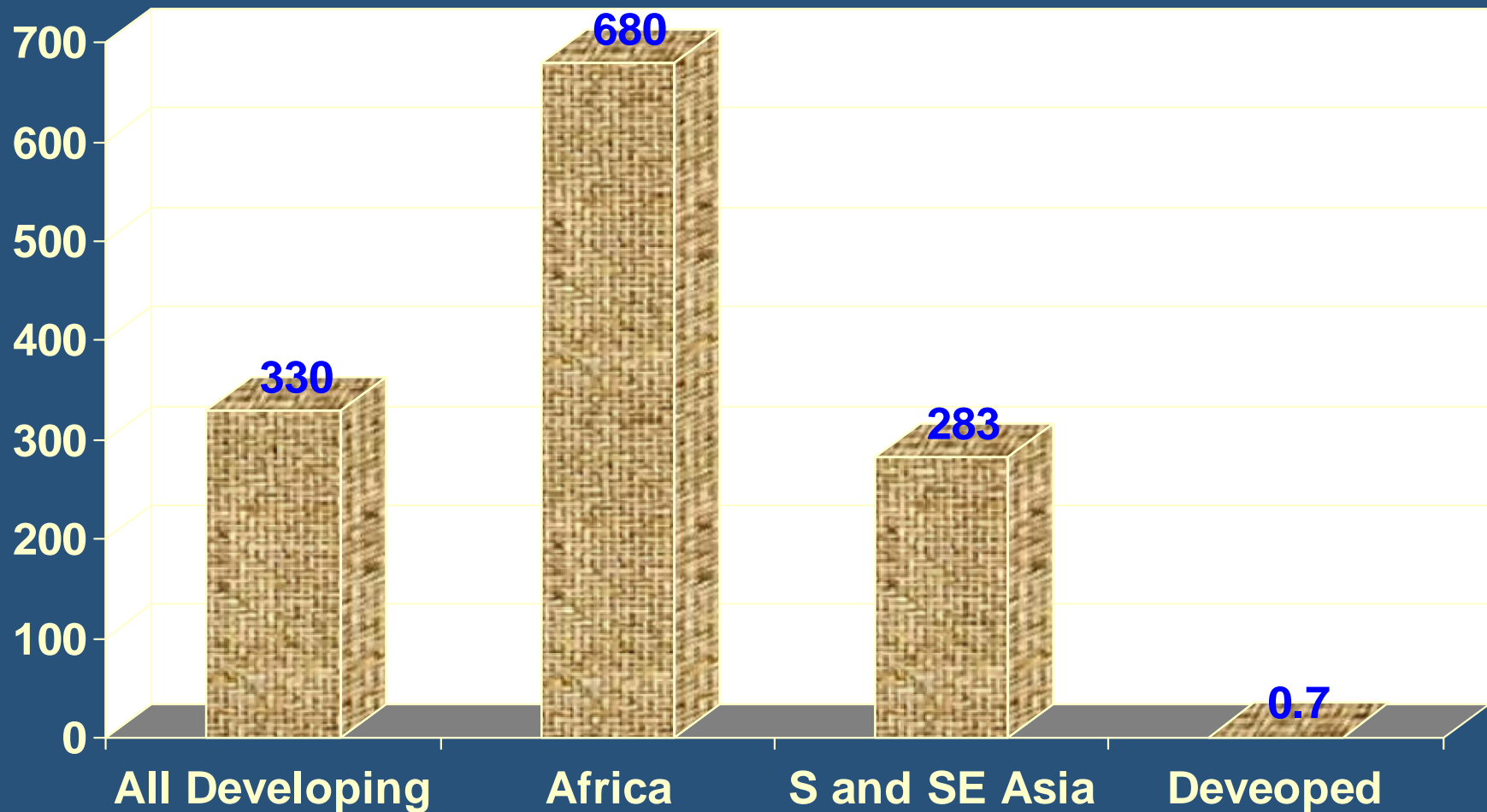
# Global burden

- | Annually It is estimated that there are about 210 million pregnancies world wide
  - 46 millions induced abortions
  - 20 millions are unsafe abortions.
- | On average, one in seven pregnancies end in abortion.
- | Abortion also accounts for 13 -50 % of all maternal deaths

# Percent contribution of unsafe abortion to overall abortion



# Deaths per 100,000 abortion procedures





# Africa's scenario

- | 95 % of unsafe abortions occur in developing countries.
- | Africa shoulder 44% of the estimated 70,000-80,000 abortion related deaths.
- | Africa has the highest maternal mortality ratio due to abortion (100/100,000 live births), as a result of high risk methods of unsafe abortion.
- | The highest unsafe abortion mortality ratio was found in  
Eastern Africa 140/100,000 LB  
Middle Africa 110/100,000 LB
- | For each women who dies there are 16-33 women who develop long term

# Why women resort to unsafe abortion?



Unsafe sex



Unwanted pregnancy



Access denied by restrictive law

Unsafe abortion

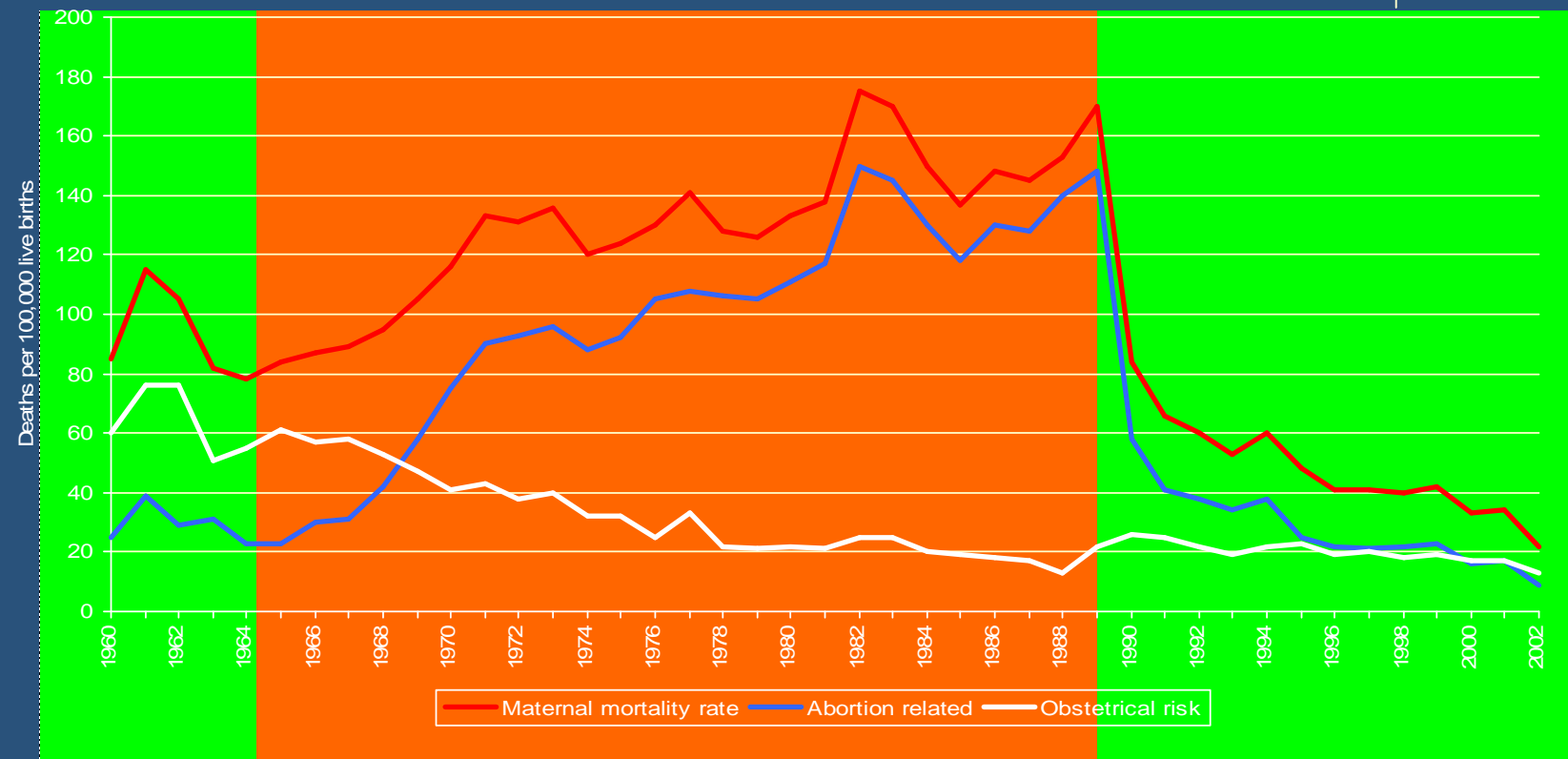




# Categories of abortion laws

category	Reason	Number of countries
1	To save the life of the women only	54
2	And also to preserve health (physical and mental)	28
3	And also in case of rape and/or incest	10
4	And also in case of fetal impairment	13
5	And also for social or economic reasons	10
6	On request	52

# The Effect of legalization in Romania



The annual number of legal abortions increased through the 1970s, leveled off in the 1980s and fell in the 1990s.



Number of abortions (in 000s)

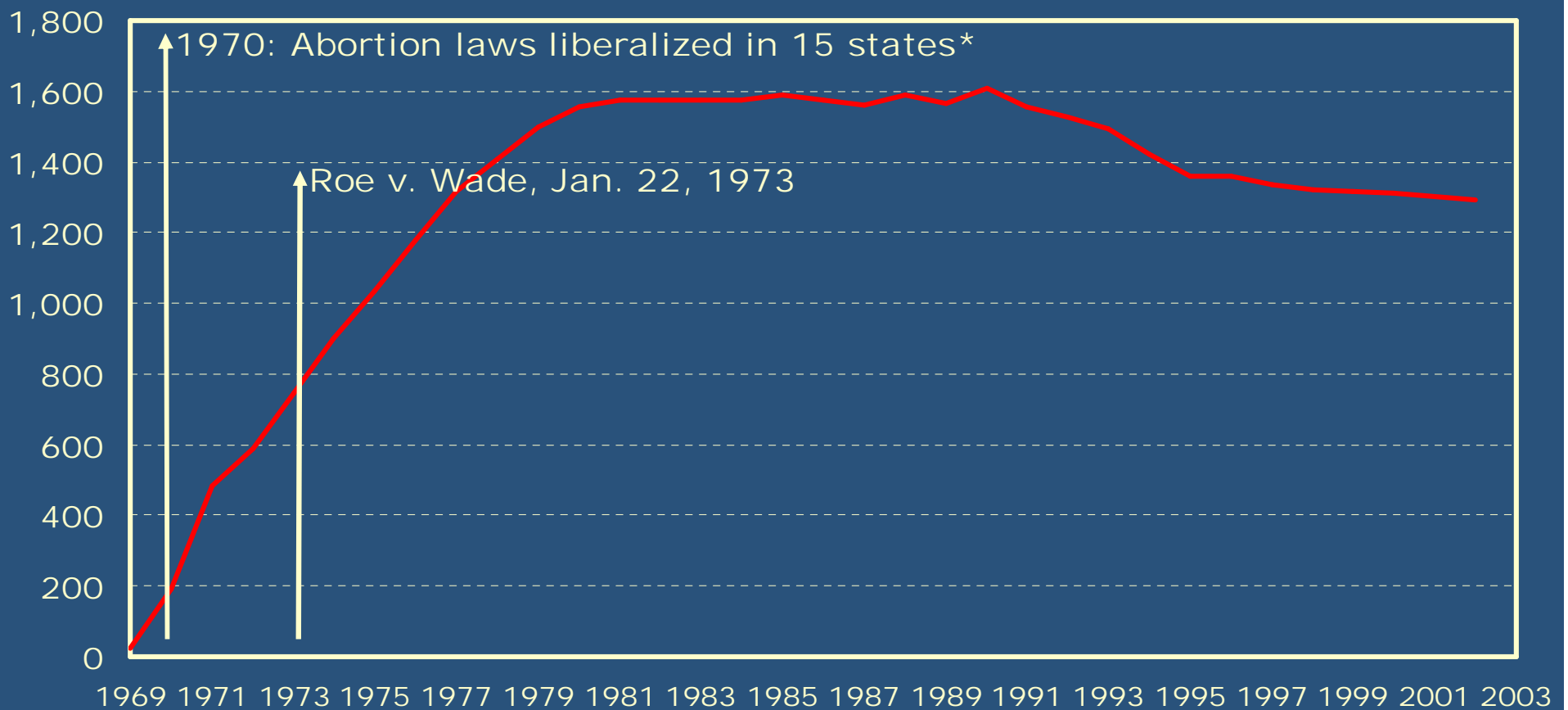




Figure 1. Number of unsafe abortions per 1000 women aged 15-49 years, by legal grounds for abortion

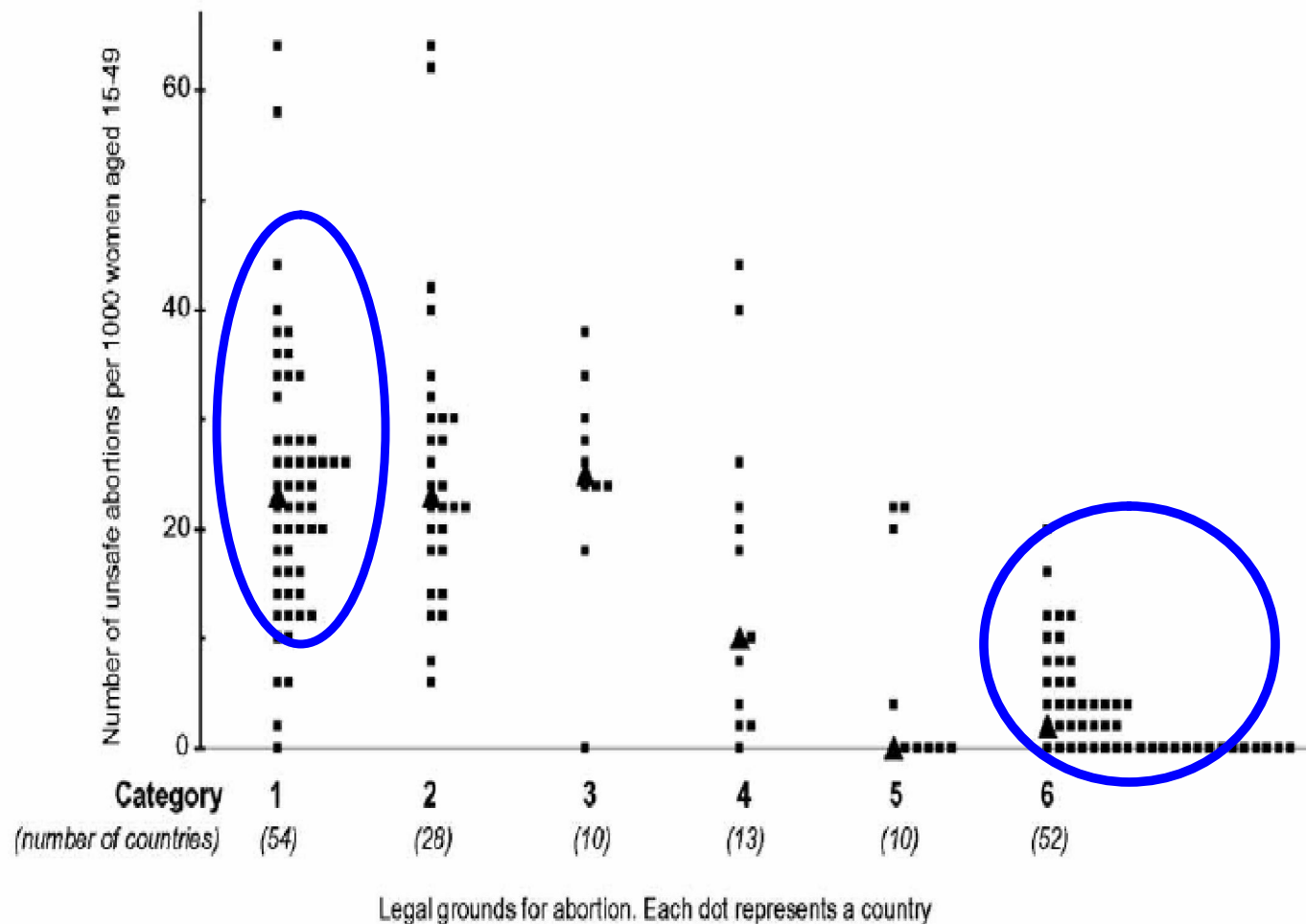
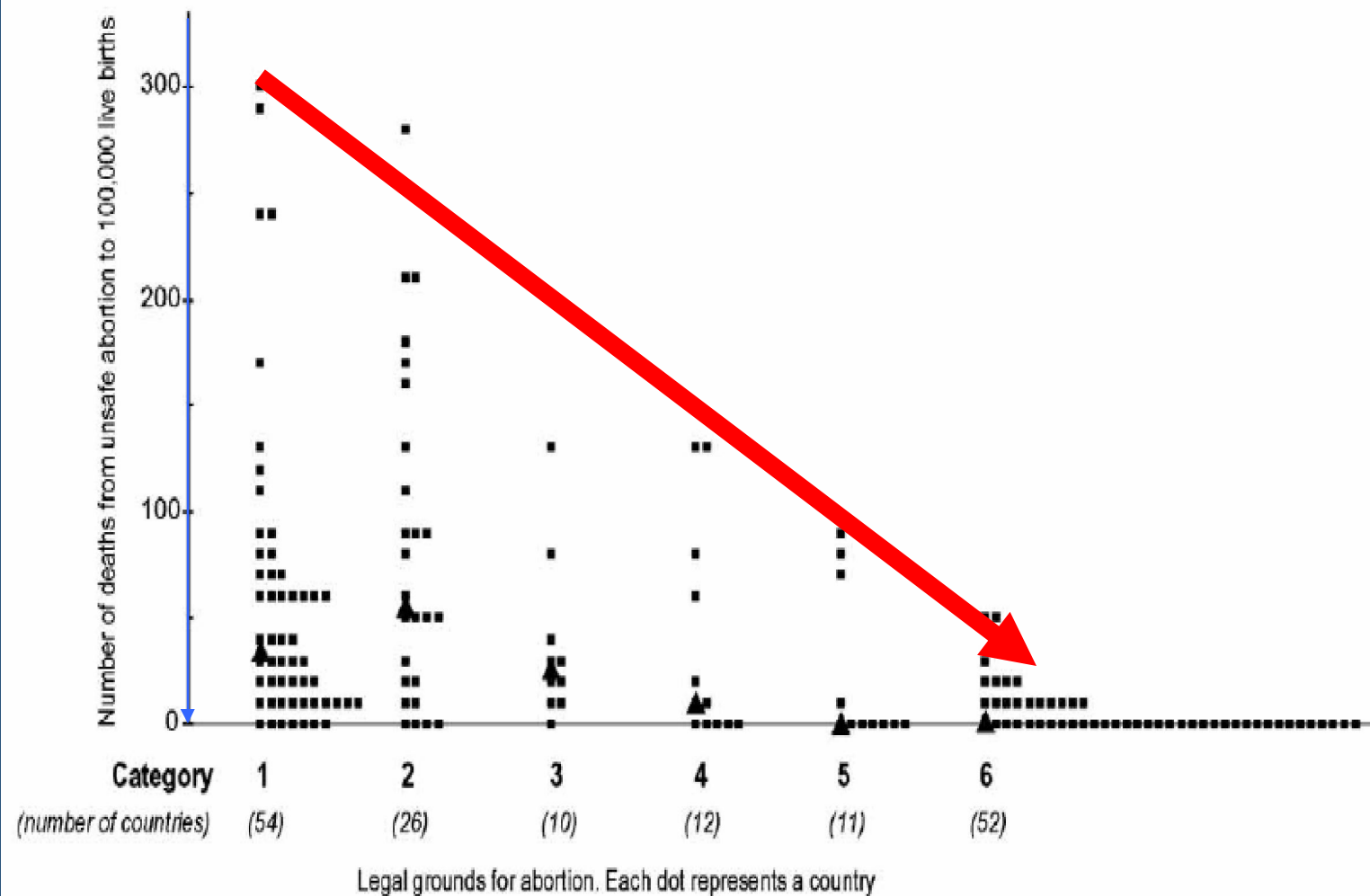


Figure 2. Deaths due to unsafe abortion to 100,000 live births, by legal grounds for abortion





# African countries and the law on abortion



To save women's life	To preserve physical health	To preserve Mental Health	Without restriction
Angola	Burkina Faso	Algeria	Cape Verde
Central African Republic	Burundi	Gambia	Tunisia
Congo	Cameron	Ghana	South Africa
Cote d'Ivoire	Djibouti	Namibia	
DRC	Eritrea	Seychelles	
Egypt	Ethiopia	Sierra Leone	
Gabon	Guinea		
Kenya	Rwanda		
Malawi	Zimbabwe		
Mali			
Libya			
Mauritania			
Mauritius			
Niger			
Nigeria			
Papua New Guinea			
Senegal			
Somalia			
Sudan			
Swaziland			
Tanzania			
Togo			
Uganda			



# Success stories in Africa

| Tunisia

| South Africa



# Tunisia

- | In 1965, Tunisia was the first Muslim country to liberalize its abortion law;
- | Tunisia's current abortion law dates from 1973
- 1. Authorizing the performance of abortions on request during the first three months of pregnancy by a physician in a hospital or health establishment or authorized clinic .
- 2. After this period, an abortion may be performed when there is a risk that the health or mental balance of the mother will be compromised by the continuation of the pregnancy or a risk that the unborn child will suffer from a serious disease or infirmity.





# Tunisia cont.

- | Tunisia was the first country in Africa (or the Middle East) to adopt
- | An official national policy directed to reducing fertility as a means of improving socio-economic development.
- | Legislation were also enacted to
  - | empower women,
  - | provide equal rights for women,
  - | abolish polygamy,
  - | introduced women's right to divorce and
  - | set a minimum age for marriage.



# Tunisia cont.

Indicator	level
MMR	120/100,000LB
Life time risk of dying	1:320
TFR	2.0
CPR	63%
All modern methods	53%
Life expectancy	73 years
PLWHA	0.1%



# The Republic of South Africa

- Up to 1975, abortion law in South Africa was governed by Roman-Dutch common law, which permitted abortion only when the life of the mother would be endangered by continuation of the pregnancy.
- It was interesting to note that the abortion law reform in South Africa was a political agenda for African National Congress.



# The Republic of South Africa

- | The law has been challenged in court by religious groups within the first six month
- | The South African Government views the fertility rate as too high. It has expressed particular concern about the high level of adolescent fertility and illegal abortion.



# The Republic of South Africa

The Government target is

- | to reduce the total fertility rate from 3.3 births per woman in 1995-2000 to 2.1 by 2010 and
- | to increase contraceptive use from 48 per cent (as estimated in 1988) to 80 per cent of fertile women.



# RSA indicators

Indicator	level
MMR	230/100,000LB
Life time risk of dying	1:120
TFR	2.8
CPR	56.3%
All modern methods	55%
Life expectancy	49 years
PLWHA	18.8%



# The facts

The world has clearly understood that abortion is a very important reproductive health problem

- | ICPD document (ICPD paragraph 8.25 and ICPD+5 paragraph 63iii),
- | In July 2003, the **Assembly of the African Union** approved the “Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights Relating to the Rights of Women” calling for the protection and advancement of women’s reproductive rights, including access to abortion for reasons including sexual assault, incest and others. The Assembly urged all member states to sign and ratify the protocol, which is the first human rights document to formally recognize abortion as a reproductive right (African Union, 2003).
- | In Sept. 2006 African Ministers of Health call for improved access to safe abortion services and mapped a plan of action



# The facts cont.

- | Restrictive abortion laws increase morbidity and mortality from abortion





# The challenges

- | Few countries in Africa are attempting to open up the legal access to abortion and the process is a slow one.
- | In countries where there are still grounds for termination of pregnancy has been liberal enough there are administrative and other barriers to access



# The challenges

- | Africa has to fight a great battle against HIV and AIDS and there is a need to reposition other RH services



# In summary

*“Women are not dying because of diseases we cannot treat. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving.”*

*Mahmoud Fathalla, MD, PhD, 1997*



# Thank You