

Detailing the Process – How an Australian Regional Hospital Set Up a Surgical Abortion Service – A Narrative Review

Konstantopoulos E (ARANZCOG (P), MD, BMedSci), Frawley N (FRANZCOG, MBBS, FRACMA, DDU, MA Bioethics, AICG)

Grampians Health Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

OVERVIEW

INTRO 1-in-4 pregnancies in Australia are electively terminated.¹ Rural and regional women face greater challenges to accessing abortion care, including financial and geographical barriers.²

CONTEXT In October 2022, Grampians Health Ballarat set up a dedicated fortnightly surgical termination of pregnancy (STOP) operating list. Previously, STOPS were added to other gynaecology lists.

AIM To detail how our regional hospital set up a regular STOP list, to promote and guide other healthcare networks to achieve the same.

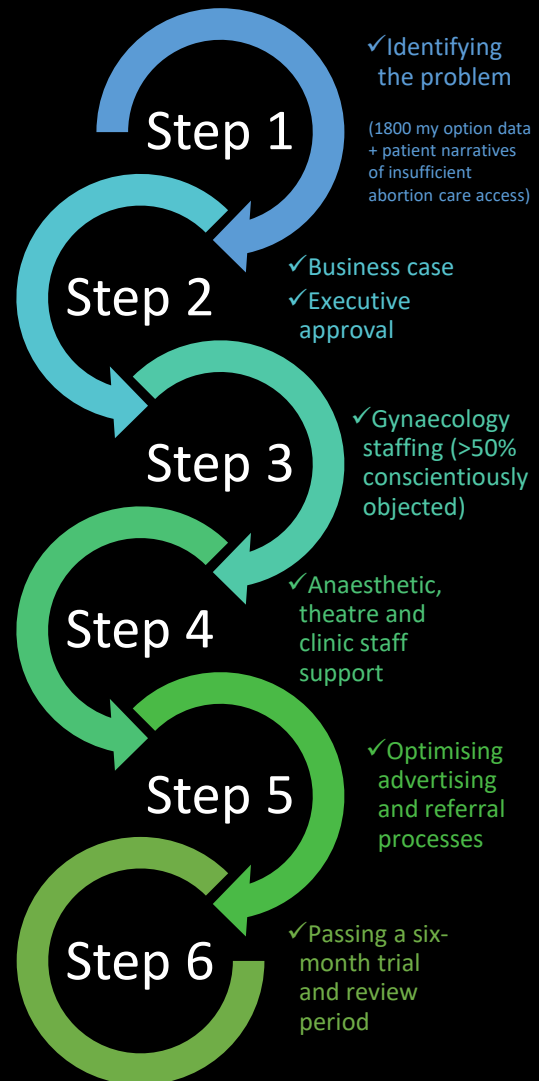
METHOD Study Type: Narrative Review
Results:

- Qualitative data on set-up process
- Quantitative data regarding no. of abortions

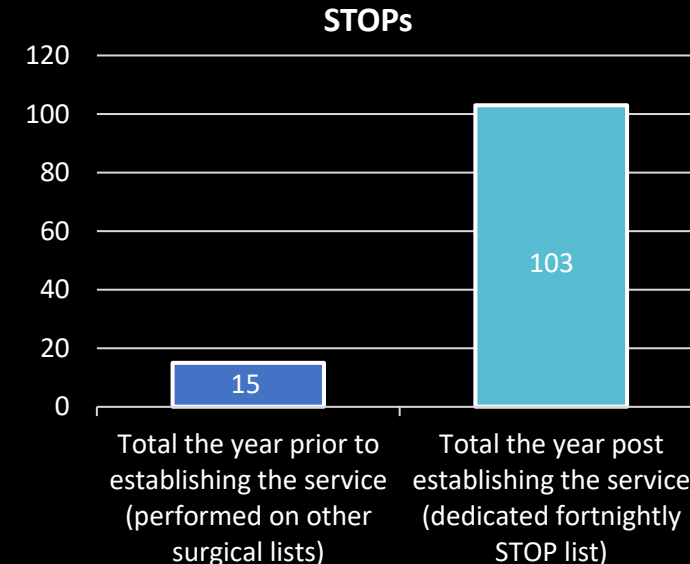
RESULTS 15 STOPS were provided in the 12 months prior to establishing the service in October 2022 and 103 STOPS in the 12 months post. Total number of abortions increased from 243 to 314.

DISCUSS The RANZCOG Guide for Abortion Care states access should be timely, safe and high-quality.³ We hope sharing our journey will help achieve this in the spirit of collaboration and advocacy.

THE PROCESS



RESULTS



CONCLUSION

This narrative review details the process of setting up a dedicated surgical termination of pregnancy service by an Australian regional hospital. Access to abortion care in general and regarding choice of method improved in the 12 months following this which aligns with national guidelines.

REFERENCES

- Wright SM et al (2021). Induced abortion in Australia: 2000-2020. Family Planning NSW, Ashfield, Australia.
- Shankar M et al (2017). Access, equity and costs of induced abortion services in Australia: A cross-sectional study. Aust N Z J Public Health. 2017 Jun;41(3):309-314. doi: 10.1111/1753-6405.12641.
- Clinical Guideline for Abortion Care: An evidenced-based guideline on abortion care in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (2023). RANZCOG, Melbourne, Australia.