



“Women’s Health and Empowerment in Latin America: Success Stories and Challenges”

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

In Latin America, **sexual and reproductive health** is where the principal women's health problems are found.



Maternal mortality is the main problem that women's health activists and feminists have identified since the 1980s.



BACKGROUND

- In **Nairobi** in 1985, governments from GRULAC group expressed “Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) in Latin America were unacceptably high.”
- In **Beijing** in 1995, the MMR in Latin American countries remained high and most governments recognized this.
- In 2010, in the MDG review, many Latin American countries still had high MMR.
- **MDG 5 had the least progress in 2010.**



**WHY ARE MMR RATES SO HIGH
IN LATIN AMERICA?**

**WHAT IS BEHIND MMR
IN LATIN AMERICA?**



The **most significant causes** are:

- **Unsafe abortions.**
- **Inequities in obstetric care
(availability, access and quality)**



ABORTION IN LATIN AMERICA

- Fully legal only in **Cuba and Guyana**.
- Legal in some cases in most countries in the region, but **services are not provided** due to religious and conservative cultural barriers.



SOME OBSTACLES

- **Chile:** Therapeutic abortion was eliminated during the last dictatorship.
- **Nicaragua:** the democratic government in 2010 eliminated therapeutic abortion in the law.



SUCCESS STORIES

- Colombia: Due to a legal action presented by women's NGO, in 2006 the Supreme Court increased the cases in which abortion is allowed by law.
- Mexico: In 2007 abortion became legal in Mexico City and started to be performed in health services.



SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)

- Uruguay: A new law to legalize abortion was passed in 2010 but the President vetoed it. Now a new law is in Parliament.
- Argentina: The Campaign for Access to Safe & Legal Abortion prepared a bill and presented it in parliament in 2009, but was not considered on time. March 2012 it was presented again but has not yet been considered.



Emergency Contraception

- It is forbidden in many countries, such as **Chile** and **Honduras**.
- In **Peru** the government was obligated to provide EC through a legal action in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- In **Colombia** a legal intervention calling for access to EC was made and the Supreme Court accepted it.
- In **Argentina** it was incorporated among the contraceptives provided for free in Public Health services in 2007.