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Legally Induced Abortion: The Demographic Profile and Hazards to the Health of Women

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ABSTRACT To review the impact on the health of women of legally induced abortion, this paper draws on the published abortion statistics of Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries to examine the consistency of the demographic pattern of legally induced abortion with the known epidemiology of medical conditions that are abortion related. The age distribution of women having abortions is modelled. The social gradient of abortion is considered. Trends in Parous and Nulliparous abortions are reviewed. Health issues among women post abortion such as mental health and especially depressive illnesses, premature and low-weight births, and breast cancer are discussed so as to identify how the incidence of these conditions might be affected by abortion and indicate the prospects and priorities for future research.