WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFECT OF LEGALIZATION OF ABORTION (TOP ACT) ON THE UTILIZATION OF CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA; A 10 YEAR REVIEW.

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Introduction
Since the implementation of the Termination of Pregnancy (TOP) Act in 1998, many journalists and health professionals have observed that termination of pregnancy may be used as the preferred method of choice for contraception. To the best of our knowledge no research has addressed whether there is truth to these fears. This paper therefore tries to address whether there is any basis for the fears.

Objective
To determine the effect of the implementation of TOP Act on the rates of utilization of other methods of contraception in one province in South Africa

Methods
The reports of the number of all patients who had undergone TOP in the past 10 years and the utilization data on contraceptives in the three districts in Mpumalanga Province is analyzed using basic statistical tools. The results were presented in table format.

Results
There has been a general decline in the utilization of contraceptive methods in the province while despite there being few accredited TOP facilities, there is a gradual rise in the number of TOPs done in the province mostly in non-designated facilities and by unqualified persons.

Discussion
These results indicate that fears that TOP may become the most popular choice of contraception in RSA if the trends in Mpumalanga can be extrapolated to the other provinces in RSA are legitimate. This has serious policy implications and our ability to fulfill the MDG5. Closer monitoring of these trends need to be done. It would also be appropriate for other developing countries such as Uganda to begin the debate about the cons and prons of TOP should it be legalized. Furthermore, more consideration should be given to fresh approach to the policy on contraception to include the concept of dual contraception: abstinence, condom and hormonal).