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Study Says Abortions Via Telemedicine Just As Safe

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A new study suggests that medication abortions are just as safe when a clinician supervises the patient remotely. The [study was published](#) in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

The study followed 20,000 patients who visited Planned Parenthood clinics in Iowa, US, between 2008 and 2015. Some were given a medical abortion, i.e. took the abortion pill in the presence of a medical professional, and some took the pill via telemedicine, wherein a doctor spoke to them about their suitability for the pill and gave them follow-up care via a video chat.

The group which received telemedicine actually reported fewer adverse incidents than the group which received in-person care.

“Now with this study, with seven years of data and 20,000 patients, we can say the risk is *not* higher than with in-person provision,” says study co-author Dr Daniel Grossman, director of Advancing New Standards In Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) at UCSF.

Doctorspeak

SheThePeople.TV asked Dr Duru Shah, director, Gynaecworld, the Center for Women’s Health & Fertility and founder president of the PCOS Society (India) her opinion. She says that while it is possible to consult via tele-medicine, she prefers to consult in person to avoid complications.

She says that it is possible to consult via telemedicine in India, especially if you have the investigative backup required, because one is not able to examine the patient.

“In routine cases, it may be possible, but in a little difficult case, it may prove disastrous which could invite litigation,” Dr Duru Shah

For example, if a woman wants to have a medical abortion and you ask her to get her ultrasound done to assess the gestational age and location of pregnancy. It is possible that the sonologist will not be efficient enough and will give a report which has missed out an ectopic pregnancy, or has misjudged the size of pregnancy. Then the patient could develop complications, which would have to be handled by another physician, if the patient is from out of the city. The responsibility still lies with the physician who initiated the process, leading to problems!

“I like to play safe for the sake of the patient and myself ! So consultations are fine, but no procedures through telemedicine,” she says.