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The impact of midtrimester abortion techniques on patients and staff

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- [Abstract](#)
- [References](#)

Abstract

We studied 250 midtrimester abortions by dilatation and extraction (D and E) under general anesthesia and compared them with abortions by the intra-amniotic injection of prostaglandin (amnio) in order to assess the physical and emotional changes experienced by patients and staff under the different circumstances represented by each procedure. We found patients undergoing D and E abortions had fewer physical complications and described the procedure as minor surgery which went smoothly. The patients who had amnio abortions had more pain and reacted with more anger and depression afterward. Nurses were more disturbed by amnio abortions in which they played major roles in supporting the patient as well as in her abortion. Physicians reported the D and E procedures to be emotionally difficult which may limit the adoption of this procedure despite its value to patients.