

Illustrative use of an actual story from a vernacular newspaper for discussion on sensitive reporting

Death being sold in the name of abortion drugs

City: A woman has lost her life after consuming drugs for inducing an abortion. Despite that, chemists in the city are openly selling these drugs. Recently, two women were hospitalized after consuming these drugs. Following these incidents, the Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) wrote a letter to the Drug Inspector seeking more control over these drugs. Last year, a lady who was four months pregnant died in a hospital after consuming drugs bought from a chemist for terminating her pregnancy. She was brought to the hospital bleeding heavily. The doctor tried to complete the abortion even though he was not certified. Unfortunately, her life could not be saved. This case as reported to the department of Women's Welfare and Police. In a recent medical experts meeting, this issue was raised by a reputed doctor, who shared that every day there are cases of 1-2 young women who consume drugs to induce abortion and come to the hospital with complications. She said that women are not aware of the side effects of these medicines. Most of these young women are 20-22 years old.

At the same time, the CMHO has taken up the issue of free and rampant sale of medical method of abortion (MMA) drugs as a serious issue. He has issued a directive that MMA drugs should not be sold without the prescription of an Obstetrician. Strict action under the MTP Act will be taken if any chemist is found to be selling MMA drugs without the proper prescription. He shared that there are reports of many chemists in the city that are selling MMA drugs without the proper prescription. Following this, all drug inspectors have been instructed to stop the sale of both Mifepristone and Misoprostol (MMA drugs).

NRHM official shared that 60% of all abortions in the state are unsafe. In India, 7% of maternal mortality is due to unsafe abortion.

Quote by (a private) Doctor: Consuming MMA drugs without the prescription of a doctor can be dangerous. Excessive bleeding can even lead to a woman's deaths. There are provisions to conduct a complete assessment prior to administering MMA drugs. A woman needs to be under observation of a doctor after consuming MMA drugs.

Misleading headlines

The headlines for this story position medical methods of abortion as unsafe while there is global evidence to establish the efficacy of this method.

This information is technically correct that MMA drugs should only be made available with a prescription. However, the context in which it is placed in this story may lead to misinterpretation of efficacy as well as legality of the drugs.

While the quote from the doctor is technically accurate, placing it in context with a negative story tends to question the efficacy and safety of medical methods of abortion.