Viewing ultrasound images in the abortion clinic – women and healthcare professional’s opinions

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Background

• UK guidance recommends healthcare professionals (HCPs) offer women the opportunity to view their pre-abortion ultrasound scan (US). UK research is limited.
• All women within NHS GGC who wish to discuss their pregnancy options are assessed at the Termination of Pregnancy and Referral (TOPAR) unit, based at Sandyford.
• TOPAR is staffed by doctors and nurses who are trained in both assessment and ultrasound scanning, and attend to the women throughout her journey.

Method

Women
• Prospective, anonymous, observational survey distributed to all women attending for assessment over a 4-month period.
• Inclusion criteria;
  • 16 years+
  • not requiring an interpreter
  • pre-abortion US performed.
• 406/421 surveys were completed and analysed.

HCP
• Anonymous survey to HCPs working within the unit. 100% response rate (n=18).

Discuss with the West of Scotland Ethics Committee and did not require approval.

Aim

• To understand current practice and our local population needs. This supports the 2020 vision for Health and Social Care by improving the quality of care we provide and ultimately allowing us to listen to women, placing them at the heart of their decision.

Results

1. Did the HCP offer you the opportunity to view your scan?

2. 61/194 (31.4%) women viewed their scan

3. Did viewing the scan alter your decision?

4. Women – should US be offered?

5. Current HCP Practice

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<tr>
<th>HCP Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
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• The role of the HCP significantly influences whether women are offered the opportunity[\(p=0.043\); Fisher’s Exact]

• However years of experience does not \([p=0.635]\); Fisher’s Exact

Conclusion

• Inconsistent practice was demonstrated within our unit. Despite HCPs developing rapport not all women wishing to view their scan were identified.

• This supports previous research that US viewing does not alter the outcome for the majority.

• We now routinely offer US viewing, sensitively, to all women. On both the anniversaries of the Abortion Act (50th) and the NHS (70th) this approach highlights the progress made in placing women at the centre of their decision.

References