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Obstetrics and Gynecology

Title

Abortion Care in the Context of Changing Legislation: Amplifying Abortion-Trained Physician Experiences and Perspectives From California, Texas, Ireland, and the UK

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Introduction

- In June 2022, the Dobbs' Decision overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973), returning abortion policy decisions to state governments.
- Prior to repeal of the 8th Amendment (2018), abortion was illegal in the Republic of Ireland, and Irish patients often traveled to the United Kingdom for abortions.
- We look to Ireland and the UK as a point of comparison for a post-Dobbs' Decision society in which some people seeking abortion care in the US must now flow between regions of differing restrictions.
- In the US abortion continues to be an impassioned and divisive topic. However, physician voices are often lacking in the national and media discourse.

Objectives

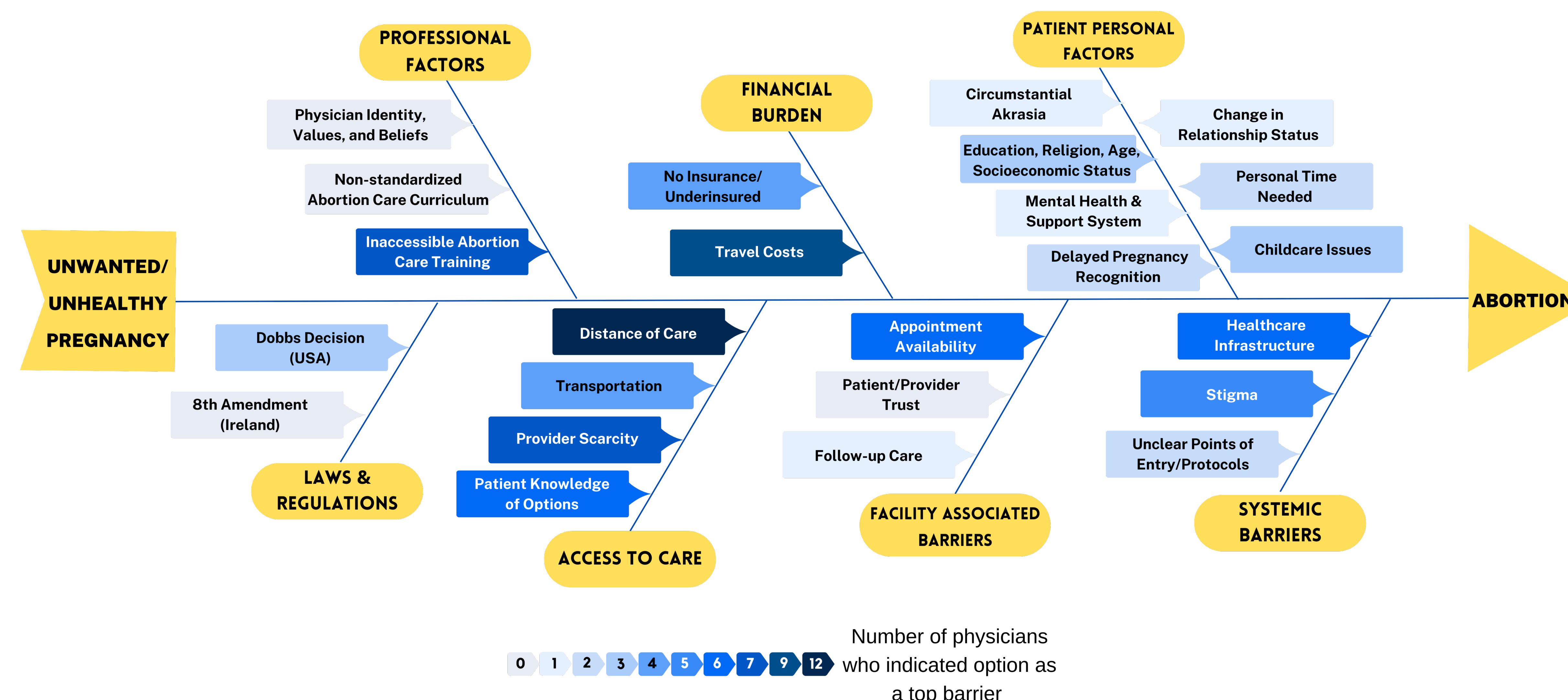
- The primary aim was to examine abortion-trained physician perspectives on barriers to abortion access and their views on physicians' roles in the legislative regulation of abortion.
- The secondary aim was to elicit the perspectives and experiences of abortion-trained physicians to understand the effects of legislation on their ability to provide patients with comprehensive reproductive care.

Methods

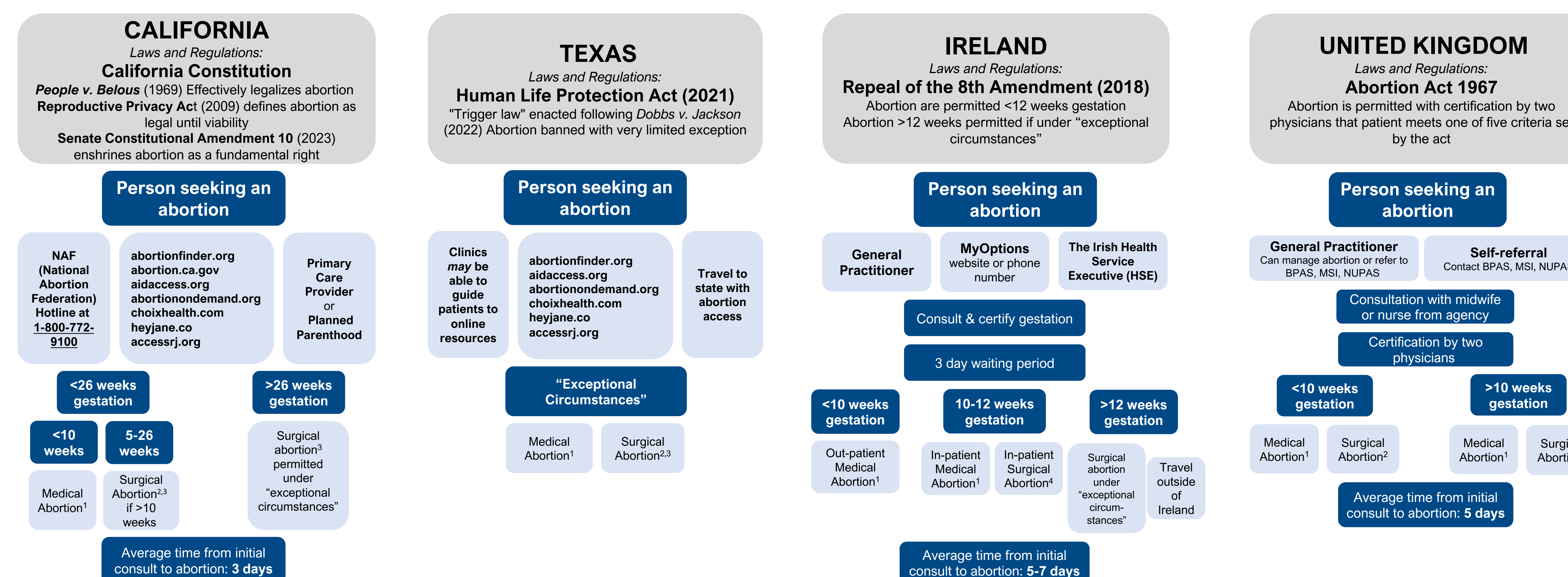
- 19 physicians practicing in academic and community settings from various specialties (Family Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, General Practice) in California (6), Texas (4), Ireland (5), and the UK (4) were identified and voluntarily agreed to participate in structured interviews relating to their abortion care training and practice.

Results

PHYSICIAN IDENTIFIED COMMON PATIENT BARRIERS TO ABORTION



STEPS TO OBTAINING AN ABORTION BY LOCATION



Footnotes:
¹Mifepristone and Misoprostol
²Dilation and Curettage
³Dilation and Evacuation
⁴Vacuum Aspiration
BPAS: British Pregnancy Advisory Service
MSI: Marie Stopes International for reproductive choices
NUPAS: National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Service

More details on laws & regulations can be found here:



Analysis

- Physicians from all geographical practices emphasized that abortion care procedures are simple, safe, and transferable to other aspects of comprehensive obstetric care.
- Across all geographical practices, physicians highlighted the importance of centering care on patients' needs.
- Commonly identified barriers to patients' abortion care were related to distance of care, travel related costs, provider scarcity, and inaccessible abortion care training for physicians.

Conclusions

- Abortion care is an essential component of healthcare and necessitates early clinical exposure particularly in the context of differing restrictions between educational and training sites.
- Abortion regulations cannot be generalized to encompass all patient circumstances; however, it is important to have abortion-trained physicians contribute to the legislative regulation of abortion to accurately highlight the needs of patients seeking this care and the barriers they face.
- Insights gathered on abortion care from physicians in California, Texas, Ireland, and the UK can be applied widely to other states and countries where decisions surrounding abortion care have shifted out of the hands of clinicians and patients.

Acknowledgements

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