

# CarePostRoe.com: Study seeks to document poor quality medical care due to new abortion bans

Due to restricted access to reproductive health care services in some states, patients are receiving suboptimal care for pregnancy problems, including cesarean scar ectopic pregnancy, previable PPRM, fetal congenital anomalies and other complications. We are requesting that you report your experience with these cases.

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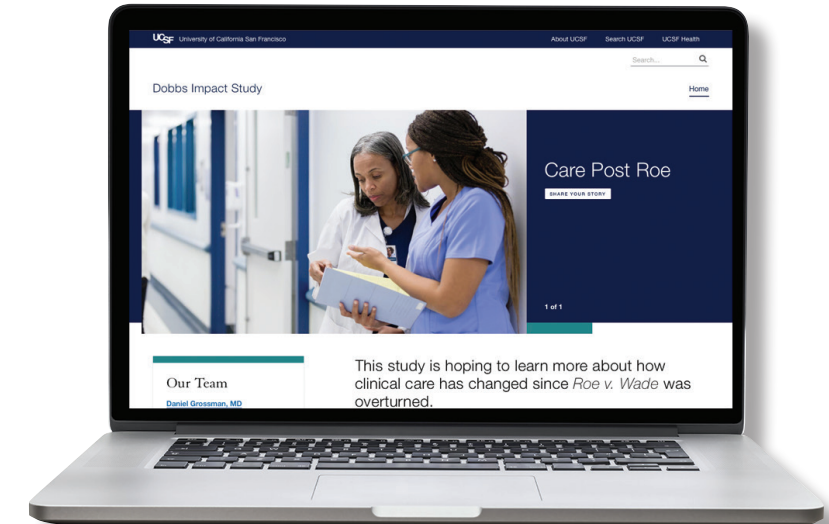
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In June 2022, the US Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization* removed federal protections for abortion that previously had been codified in *Roe v Wade*. Since this removal, most abortions have been banned in at least 13 states, and about half of states are expected to attempt to ban or heavily restrict abortion.<sup>1,2</sup> These laws banning abortion are having effects on patient care far beyond abortion, leading to uncertainty and fear among providers and denied or delayed care for patients.<sup>3,4</sup> It is critical that research documents the harmful effects of this policy change.

Patients that are pregnant with fetuses with severe malformations have had to travel long distances to other states to obtain care.<sup>5</sup> Others

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CarePostRoe.com was launched to collect narratives from health care providers. Clinicians can share information about a case through a brief survey linked on the website that will allow them to either submit a written narrative or a voice memo.

have faced delays in obtaining treatment for ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, and even for other conditions that use medications that could potentially cause an abortion.<sup>6,7</sup> These cases have the potential to result in

serious harm or death of the patient with altered care. There is a published report from Texas showing how the change in practice due to the 6-week abortion ban imposed in 2021 was associated with a doubling of severe

morbidity for patients presenting with preterm premature rupture of membranes and other complications before 22 weeks' gestation.<sup>8</sup>

While these cases have been highlighted in the media, there has not been a resource that comprehensively documents the changes in care that clinicians have been forced to make because of abortion bans as well as the consequences for their patients' health. The media also may not be the most desirable platform for sharing cases of substandard care if providers feel their confidentiality may be breached as they are told by their employers to avoid speaking with reporters.<sup>9</sup> Bearing this in mind, our team of researchers at Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California San Francisco and the Texas Policy Evaluation Project at the University of Texas at Austin has launched a project aiming to collect stories of poor quality care post-Roe from health care professionals across the United States. The aim of the study is to document examples of the challenges in patient care that have arisen since the *Dobbs* decision.

The study website *CarePostRoe.com* was launched in October 2022 to collect narratives from health care

providers who participated in the care of a patient whose management was different from the usual standard due to a need to comply with new restrictions on abortion since the *Dobbs* decision. These providers can include physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives, physician assistants, social workers, pharmacists, psychologists, or other allied health professionals. Clinicians can share information about a case through a brief survey linked on the website that will allow them to either submit a written narrative or a voice memo. The submissions are anonymous, and providers are not asked to submit any protected health information. If the submitter would like to share more information about the case via telephone interview, they will be taken to a separate survey which is not linked to the narrative submission to give contact information to participate in an interview.

Since October, more than 40 cases have been submitted that document patient cases from over half of the states with abortion bans. Clinicians describe pregnant patients with severe fetal malformations who have had to overcome financial and logistical barriers to travel to access abortion care.

Several cases of patients with cesarean scar ectopic pregnancies have been submitted, including cases that are being followed expectantly, which is inconsistent with the standard of care.<sup>10</sup> We also have received several submissions about cases of preterm premature rupture of membranes in the second trimester where the patient was sent home and presented several days later with a severe infection requiring management in the intensive care unit. Cases of early pregnancy loss that could have been treated safely and routinely also were delayed, increasing the risk to patients who, in addition to receiving substandard medical care, had the trauma of fearing they could be prosecuted for receiving treatment.

We hope these data will be useful to document the impact of the Court's decision and to improve patient care as health care institutions work to update their policies and protocols to reduce delays in care in the face of legal ambiguities. If you have been involved in such a case since June 2022, including caring for a patient who traveled from another state, please consider submitting it at *CarePostRoe.com*, and please spread the word through your networks. ●

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