

The Impact of Denying a Wanted Abortion on Women and Children

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Gender in the Economy

Motivation

- ▶ At least one-fourth of women worldwide undergo an abortion at some point in their lives, yet restrictive laws affect 753M women of reproductive age, or 40% globally

Bearak et al. '22; Jones & Jerman '22; Center for Reproductive Rights '24

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- ▶ Women denied legal abortion either continue unwanted pregnancies or resort to unsafe procedures to terminate them—both of which can harm their well-being

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- ▶ Women denied legal abortion either continue unwanted pregnancies or resort to unsafe procedures to terminate them—both of which can harm their well-being
- ▶ Understanding the causal effects of limited abortion access is crucial but challenging
 - ▶ It requires identifying women seeking abortions, tracking outcomes, and exogenous variation
 - ▶ The best evidence comes from the Turnaway Study surveying 1,000 women Foster et al. '18; Miller et al. '23
- ▶ We still know little about how denying legal abortion affects women and children

This paper: how denying abortion impacts women and children

Colombia is an ideal setting: high-quality admin data + exogenous variation in abortion

- ▶ **Identify women seeking abortions:** Women facing barriers to abortion can file a *tutela*. A successful *tutela* ↑ abortion access; an unsuccessful *tutela* results in denial
- ▶ **Tracking outcomes:** We link women seeking abortions through *tutelas* to birth and death records and census-like info on sociodemographic outcomes up to 15 yrs later
- ▶ **Causal identification:** We exploit differences in the likelihood of being denied legal abortion based on the leniency of the judge randomly assigned to the case

Main results

- ▶ **Female judges** are 20 p.p. **less** likely than **male judges** to deny abortion → IV

Main results

- ▶ **Female judges** are 20 p.p. **less** likely than **male judges** to deny abortion → IV
- ▶ Denying abortion has **immediate** and **lasting** negative effects on women & children:
 - ▶ Women's risk of **dying** within nine months ↑ by 2.5 p.p., due to septicemia & infections
⇒ Women denied legal abortions turn to unsafe procedures to terminate pregnancies
 - ▶ Distorts **fertility** decisions: ↑ 2X likelihood of raising children and ↑ # of children
 - ▶ Women endure long-term **health issues**, lower **education**, and **economic** challenges
 - ▶ ↓ LFP, hh income; ↑ single motherhood, poverty, gov't assistance
 - ▶ These effects **persist** even 8+ years later and are **worse** for teenagers and childless women
 - ▶ Existing children are less likely to **attend school** and more likely to engage in **child labor**

Contributions

1. The impact of abortion policy on women and children Ananat et al. '07, '09; Ananat & Hungerman '12; Angrist & Evans '00; Brooks & Zohar '24; Antón et al. '18; Clarke '24; Clarke & Mühlrad '21; Dench et al. '24; Farin et al. '24; Hjalmarsson et al. '21; Jones & Pineda-Torres '23; Miller et al. '23; Mitrut & Wolff '11; Myers '17; Molland '16; Pop-Eleches '06, '10;
2. The effects of fertility on women and children Aaronson et al. '20; Adda et al. '17; Agüero & Marks '11; Ananat & Hungerman '12; Angrist & Evans '98; Angrist et al. '10; Bailey '06; Bailey '13; Bailey et al. '19; Black et al. '05, '10; Bleakley & Lange '09; Brinch et al. '17; Bronars & Grogger '94; Caceres-Delpiano '06; Cristia '08; Cruces & Galiani '07; Doepke et al. '23; Fletcher & Wolfe '09; Gallen et al. '24; Goldin & Katz '02; Hotz et al. '05; Kleven et al. '23, '19; Lin et al. '20; Lundborg et al. '17; Mogstad & Wiswall '16; Pop-Eleches '06; Qian '18; Rosenzweig & Zhang '09; Rosenzweig & Wolpin '80; Schultz '08; Vere '11

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- ▶ We **identify** abortion seekers and establish a **clear counterfactual** for assessing abortion access
 - ▶ We estimate effects across **many dimensions** (health, education, LFP, poverty, gov't assistance...)
 - ▶ Large N (20k v. 600 in Miller et al. '23) enables **precise** estimates even on rare outcomes like mortality
 - ▶ We provide individual-level evidence of abortion denial affecting **existing children's** well-being
- ⇒ Esp. important given current trend of rolling back abortion rights in multiple countries like U.S.

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 - ▶ *Unwanted* fertility \neq wanted or planned fertility; relevant for debates on reproductive rights
 - ▶ *Unwanted* fertility has **substantial detrimental effects** (e.g., disemployment effect is twice the typical child penalty, and affects many other dimensions), **worsening** outcomes for older siblings

Outline

Background and Data

Empirical Strategy

Impacts on Women

- Childbearing and Mortality

- Long-Term Effects on Fertility and Family Formation

- Long-Term Effects on Health and Education

- Long-Term Effects on Economic Well-Being

Impacts on Children

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Abortion law in Colombia (2006–22) and barriers to abortion care

Abortions are decriminalized under 3 circumstances:

1. When a physician or psychiatrist certifies that the pregnancy threatens the woman's life or her *physical, mental, emotional, or social* health
2. When a physician verifies severe fetal malformations
3. When the pregnancy is a result of rape, incest, or unwanted insemination¹

No gestational age limits. All providers must offer safe abortions free of cost within 5 days.

But implementation has been inconsistent, and stigmas remain for women and practitioners, creating barriers to abortion care [Diaz Amado et al. '10](#); [Stifani et al. '18](#); [González & Castro '17](#)

▶ Ex Conscientious objection without referral, unnecessary judicial permissions, bureaucratic delays

¹Today, 40% of women of reproductive age currently live in countries imposing similar or stricter restrictions.

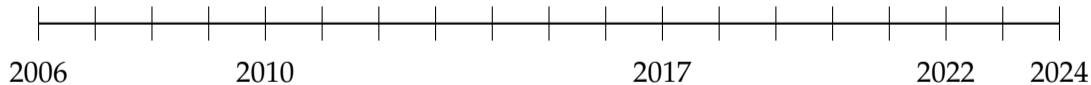
Protecting abortion rights through *tutelas*

Women can protect their abortion rights through a *tutela*, a writ for immediate protection of fundamental constitutional rights

- ▶ Free, easy (no legal representation), and simple (**no direct interaction** with judge)
- ▶ **Quick:** judges have 10 days to decide whether to accept, deny, or declare inadmissible
- ▶ Failure to comply within 48 hours can lead to fines and imprisonment
- ▶ A common recourse: one-third of our sample has ever filed a *tutela*
- ▶ Allocated to judges **randomly** → prevents selection of judges and cases²

²Art. 86 & 228 of Constitution, Art. 50 of Statutory Law, Decrees 2591/1991, 1382/2000, 1069/2015, 1983/2017, 333/2021.

Abortion rights claims
(*tutelas*)

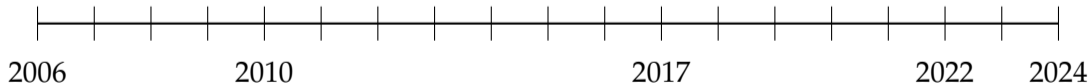


High-quality linked administrative microdata

▶ Match rates

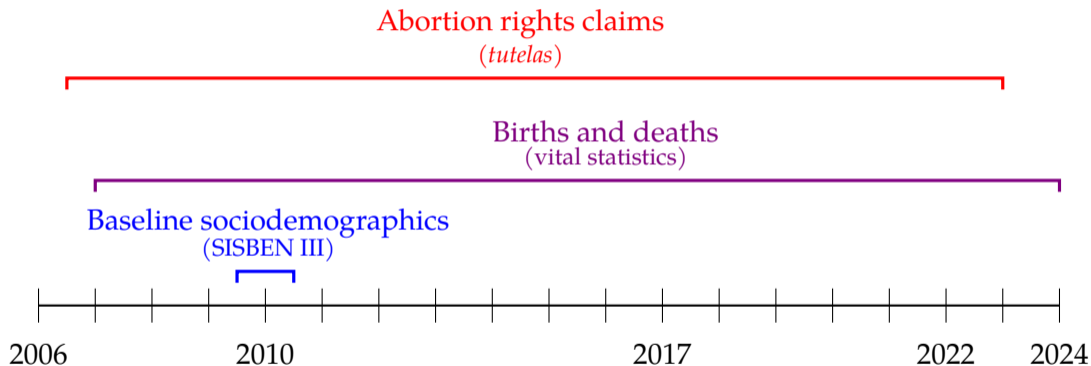
Abortion rights claims
(*tutelas*)

Births and deaths
(vital statistics)



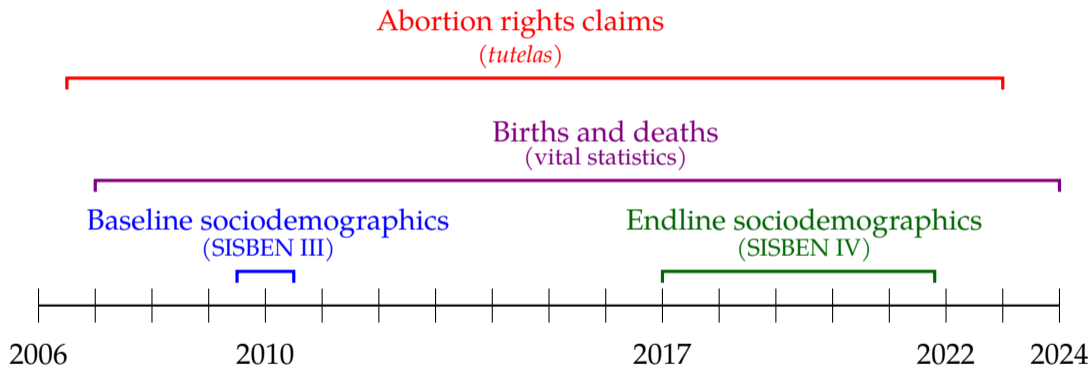
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Summary statistics

All judicial claims filed in Medellín 2006–22

	Rights claims (<i>tutelas</i>)	
	All (1)	Abortion (2)
Female judge (%)	46.0	42.3
Denies (%)	32.8	53.7
Accepts (%)	68.9	38.6
Inadmissible (%)	1.9	7.7
<i>N</i> claims	1,646,255	19,760
<i>N</i> claimants	855,351	19,649
<i>N</i> offices	18	4
<i>N</i> judges	585	125

Baseline characteristics of women filing abortion rights claims

- ▶ 28 years old (21% are teenagers)
- ▶ 22% already have children; 78% are childless
- ▶ 41% are married or cohabitating
- ▶ Most lack a high school degree and come from low socioeconomic backgrounds

▶ Table

▶ Fig

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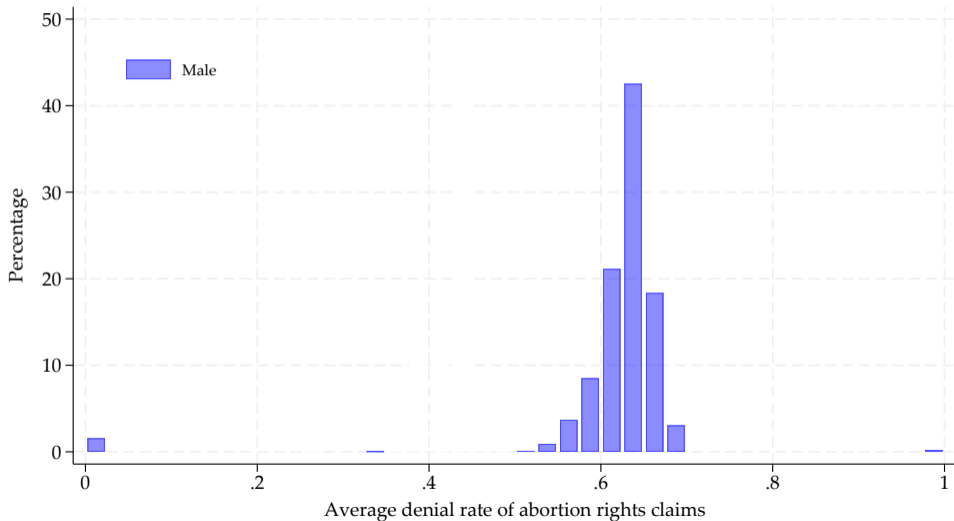
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Judge *gender* predicts abortion denial

▶ More

▶ Judge stringency

Denial rate is 62% for male judges

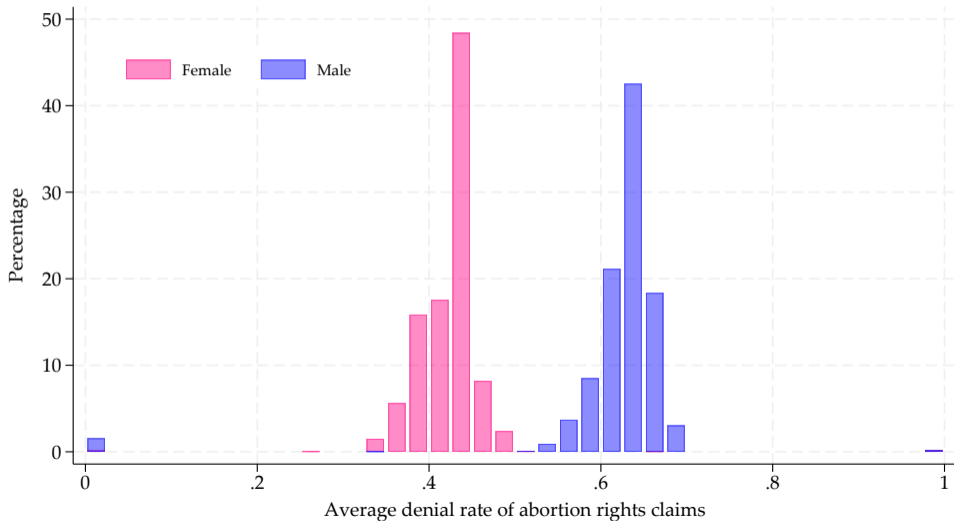


Judge *gender* predicts abortion denial

▶ More

▶ Judge stringency

Denial rate is 62% for male judges vs. 42% for female judges \Rightarrow a 20 pp (32%) gap (p -value is 0.00)



Judge assignment is uncorrelated with observable characteristics

$$X_i = \sigma_{j(i)} + \delta_{o(i)} + \varepsilon_i$$

	<i>F</i> -Statistic (1)	<i>p</i> -value (2)
Age at SISBEN III survey	1.115	0.204
Age at abortion encounter	1.115	0.204
Teenager at abortion encounter	1.165	0.124
No education	0.920	0.703
Elementary	0.975	0.554
Middle school	1.044	0.362
High school	1.062	0.316
Postsecondary	1.495	0.001
Wealth (SISBEN score)	1.155	0.137
Residential strata 0 or 1	1.024	0.416
Household size	0.883	0.792
Has children	0.856	0.847
Number of children	0.809	0.920
Single	0.908	0.734
Married or cohabitating	1.108	0.217
Divorced or separated	1.179	0.107
Widowed	0.512	1.000
Lives in Medellin	0.745	0.974
Joint <i>F</i> -test	1.018	
<i>p</i> -value	0.433	

Notes: The *p*-value is for *F*-test of joint significance of variables listed in rows. Sample restricted to 11,128 women filing abortion rights claims after June 2010.

IV uses judge *gender* as an instrument for abortion denial

▶ FS

▶ Validity

IV specification:

$$Denied_i = \gamma Female_{j(i)} + \delta_{o(i)} + e_i \quad (1)$$

$$Y_i = \beta Denied_i + \delta_{o(i)} + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where i is case-individual (the first abortion rights claim for a given pregnancy)

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Immediate impacts on women's fertility and mortality

► Births

► SISBEN

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Live birth	0.290	

Notes: The sample comprises 19,759 women who filed an abortion rights claim between 2006 and 2022. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Immediate impacts on women's fertility and mortality

► Births

► SISBEN

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Live birth	0.290	0.307*** (0.032)

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Live birth	0.290	0.307*** (0.032)
Death	0.016	0.025*** (0.009)

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Immediate impacts on women's fertility and mortality

► Births

► SISBEN

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Live birth	0.290	0.307*** (0.032)
Death	0.016	0.025*** (0.009)
Septicemia and infections	0.003	0.034*** (0.005)
Obstetric causes	0.001	-0.001 (0.003)
Other health causes	0.010	-0.010 (0.007)
External causes	0.002	0.001 (0.003)
Live birth and death	0.002	-0.003 (0.003)

Notes: The sample comprises 19,759 women who filed an abortion rights claim between 2006 and 2022. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Impacts on *subsequent* fertility and mortality (10+ months later)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Live birth	0.061	-0.019 (0.020)
Death	0.008	0.002 (0.007)
Another abortion rights claims	0.007	-0.007 (0.005)

Notes: The outcomes are realized at least 10 months after filing the abortion rights claim.
Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

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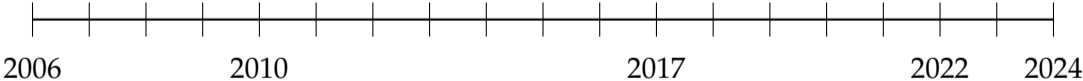
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A quick reminder about the data

Abortion rights claims
(tutelas)



Endline sociodemographics
(SISBEN IV)



Long-term effects on fertility and family formation

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Has children	0.358	0.346*** (0.050)
Number of children	0.611	0.510*** (0.099)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion rights claim when they are about 33 years old.
Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey.
Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Long-term effects on fertility and family formation

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Has children	0.358	0.346*** (0.050)
Number of children	0.611	0.510*** (0.099)
Never-married	0.335	-0.005 (0.047)
Married or cohabitating	0.428	-0.080 (0.049)
Divorced, separated, or widowed	0.237	0.086** (0.038)

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Single mother	0.370	0.153*** (0.048)

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Single mother	0.370	0.153*** (0.048)
Lives with adult relative(s)	0.755	0.181*** (0.048)

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Long-term effects on health

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Had a health problem (last 30 days)	0.224	0.138*** (0.041)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion rights claim when they are about 33 years old. Reports impact on a dummy for answering 'Yes': "Within the past 30 days, have you experienced any illnesses, accidents, dental issues, or health concerns that did not require hospitalization?" "Did you seek assistance from a healthcare provider such as a general practitioner, specialist, dentist, therapist, or another health professional?" and "Were you assisted?" Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Long-term effects on health

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Had a health problem (last 30 days)	0.224	0.138*** (0.041)
Sought healthcare (last 30 days)	0.203	0.081** (0.038)
Received healthcare (last 30 days)	0.198	0.068* (0.038)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion rights claim when they are about 33 years old. Reports impact on a dummy for answering 'Yes': "Within the past 30 days, have you experienced any illnesses, accidents, dental issues, or health concerns that did not require hospitalization?" "Did you seek assistance from a healthcare provider such as a general practitioner, specialist, dentist, therapist, or another health professional?" and "Were you assisted?" Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Long-term effects on educational attainment

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
No education	0.093	0.049* (0.028)
Elementary	0.447	0.014 (0.040)
Middle school	0.148	-0.005 (0.035)
High school	0.227	-0.098** (0.042)
Postsecondary	0.081	0.040 (0.029)

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Long-term effects on LFP, poverty, and welfare assistance

[▶ Penalty](#)[▶ More](#)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Labor-force participation	0.241	-0.153*** (0.035)
Employed	0.194	-0.106*** (0.036)
Looking for job	0.047	-0.047*** (0.017)
Homemaker	0.558	0.122*** (0.048)
No activity	0.074	0.085*** (0.030)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion claim when they are about 33 years old. Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Long-term effects on LFP, poverty, and welfare assistance

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No activity	0.074	0.085*** (0.030)
Extreme or moderate poverty	0.396	0.187*** (0.054)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion claim when they are about 33 years old. Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

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<i>Familia en Acción</i> recipient	0.033	0.173*** (0.031)
Subsidized health regime	0.709	0.088** (0.044)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion claim when they are about 33 years old. Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Long-term effects on household income

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Pre-transfer income	968,496	-239,585* (129,057)
Salary	528,543	-403,523*** (95,852)
Self-employment	223,501	167,877* (92,500)
Other	216,453	40,299 (52,301)
Transfers	32,957	44,479*** (10,487)
Post-transfer income	1,001,454	-195,106 (127,108)

Notes: Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey.

Additional results

The adverse effects of denying abortion are...

... **Immediate** and **permanent**

▶ Fertility

▶ Health

▶ High school diploma

▶ LFP

▶ Poverty

▶ Gov't assistance

... **Robust** to using standard judge stringency IV

▶ Births and deaths

▶ LT women

▶ LT children

... **Worse** for pregnant teenagers ▶ By age and previously childless women ▶ By motherhood

- ▶ But women who already had children also suffer economically ⇒ Likely affects children

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The long-term effects of denying abortion on existing children

▸ Health

▸ Education

▸ By age

▸ All existing children

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Attends preschool, school, or college	0.780	-0.342*** (0.102)
Truancy	0.104	0.090 (0.077)
Grade retention	0.487	0.179 (0.120)
Working	0.024	0.102*** (0.041)

Notes: The sample is restricted to the 2,317 youngest existing child of women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Their average age was 5.5 at the time of the abortion rights claim and 12 at the time of the survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

During the weekdays, where does the child usually stay and with whom?

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Daycare or school	0.042	0.002 (0.049)
Home with parent	0.354	-0.282*** (0.092)
Home with an adult relative	0.048	0.306*** (0.119)
Home with child relative	0.161	-0.008 (0.097)
Home alone	0.270	0.498*** (0.140)

Notes: Among the 2,317 youngest existing children, this question is available for 882. Their average age was 5.5 at the time of the abortion rights claim and 12 at the time of the survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

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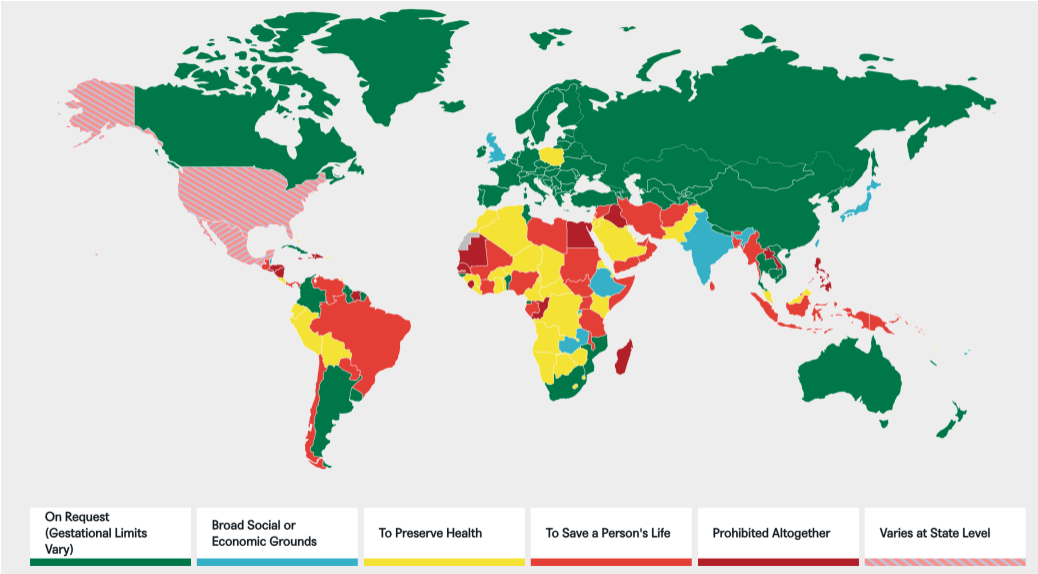
- ▶ Denying legal abortion has long-lasting detrimental effects on women and children
 - ⇒ Ensuring access to safe abortion is crucial not only for the life, health, and economic well-being of women but also for the well-being of existing children
- ▶ Our findings inform debate about consequences of restricting access to safe abortions

Thank you!

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The world's abortion laws in 2024

[▶ Return](#)



Source: Center for Reproductive Rights '24

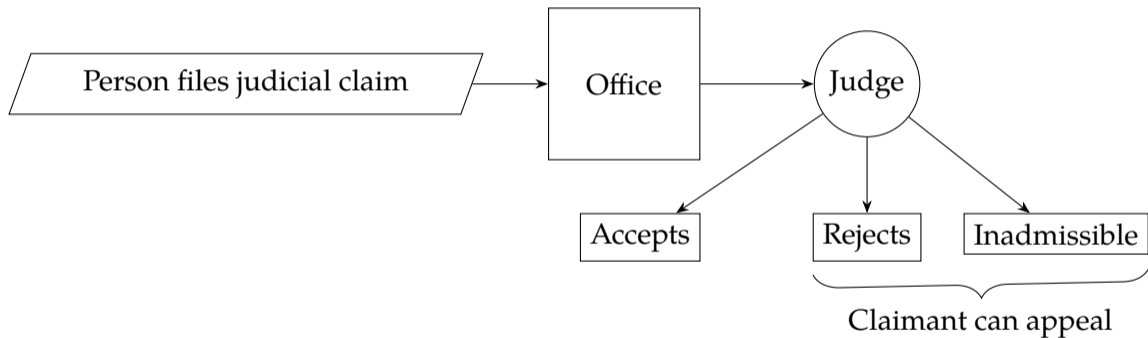
Other examples illustrating shortage of committed providers and inconsistent access to care

[▶ Return](#)

- ▶ Providers refused procedure due to moral or philosophical beliefs
- ▶ Providers misinterpreted law, neglecting less severe physical health risks or risks to mental and social health
- ▶ Insurers did not accept certifications from out-of-network physicians or psychiatrists
- ▶ Providers incorrectly imposed gestational age limits
- ▶ Abortion care was not provided within the required 5-day period or denied altogether

Process for filing claims in Colombia

▶ Return



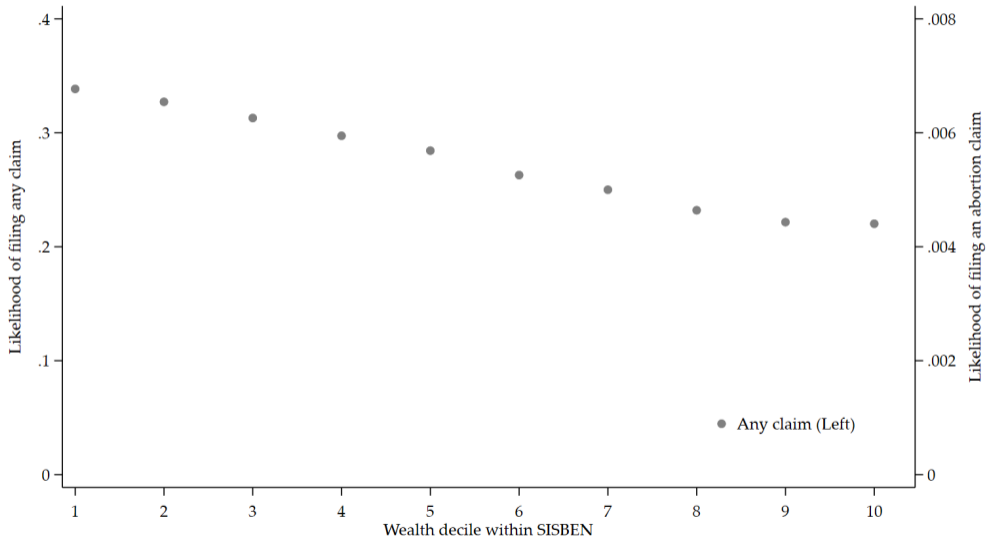
Baseline characteristics of women filing abortion rights claims

[Return](#)

	All women in Medellin (1)	Women filing <i>tutelas</i>					(1)-(2) <i>p</i> -value (7)	(1)-(3) <i>p</i> -value (8)	(4)-(5) <i>p</i> -value (9)
		Any <i>tutela</i> (2)	Abortion rights claims						
			All (3)	Denied (4)	Not denied (5)	Compliers (6)			
Age at SISBEN III survey	30.457	39.313	21.890	21.943	21.828	21.824	0.000	0.000	0.513
Age at abortion encounter			28.054	28.107	27.991	28.139			0.490
Teenager at abortion encounter			0.208	0.209	0.206	0.178			0.714
No education	0.209	0.125	0.147	0.150	0.143	0.148	0.000	0.000	0.279
Elementary	0.385	0.491	0.498	0.500	0.496	0.548	0.000	0.089	0.697
Middle school	0.163	0.160	0.151	0.145	0.159	0.121	0.000	0.009	0.037
High school	0.179	0.174	0.169	0.171	0.166	0.154	0.000	0.237	0.471
Postsecondary	0.090	0.074	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.734
Wealth (SISBEN score)	42.476	39.765	41.440	41.284	41.623	37.960	0.000	0.000	0.313
Residential strata 0 or 1	0.235	0.307	0.287	0.288	0.285	0.315	0.000	0.601	0.696
Household size	5.226	5.189	4.951	4.923	4.983	4.593	0.000	0.000	0.257
Has children	0.205	0.208	0.217	0.215	0.218	0.188	0.000	0.011	0.765
Number of children	0.304	0.307	0.318	0.311	0.326	0.263	0.002	0.042	0.232
Single	0.519	0.307	0.343	0.327	0.362	0.335	0.000	0.000	0.000
Married or cohabitating	0.309	0.417	0.413	0.431	0.391	0.450	0.000	0.441	0.000
Divorced or separated	0.096	0.156	0.124	0.121	0.129	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.197
Widowed	0.075	0.120	0.119	0.121	0.117	0.129	0.000	0.009	0.546
Lives in Medellin	0.998	0.996	0.905	0.897	0.914	0.818	0.000	0.000	0.002
<i>N</i>	1,283,721	294,757	11,129	6,010	5,119				

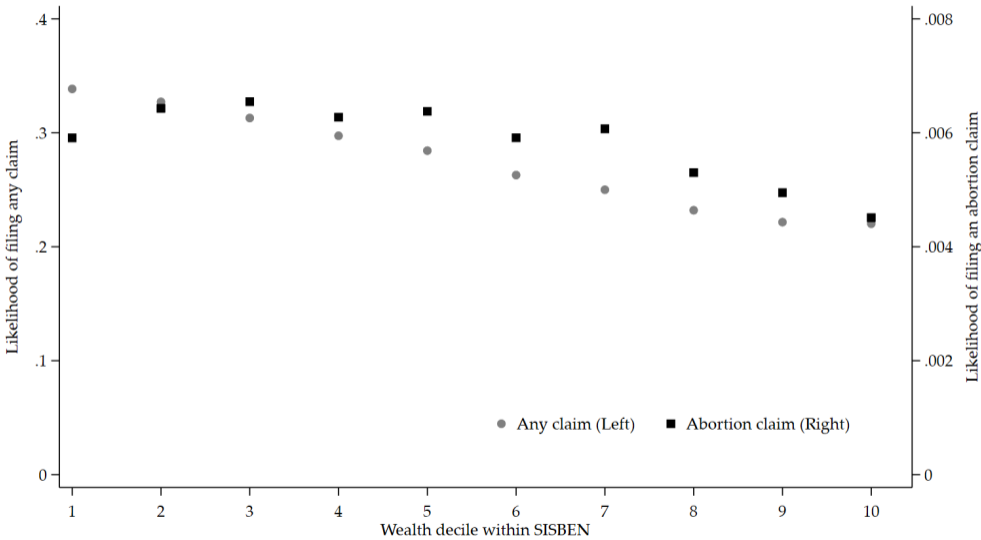
The likelihood of filing an abortion rights claim by wealth decile

[Return](#)



The likelihood of filing an abortion rights claim by wealth decile

[Return](#)



Female judges are less likely to deny abortions than male judges [▶ Return](#)

Q Are female judges observationally different (e.g., younger, less experienced)?

Female judges are less likely to deny abortions than male judges [▶ Return](#)

Q Are female judges observationally different (e.g., younger, less experienced)?

A NO.

[▶ Fig](#)

[▶ Table](#)

[▶ Table w controls](#)

Female judges are less likely to deny abortions than male judges [▶ Return](#)

Q Are **female judges** observationally different (e.g., younger, less experienced)?

A NO.

[▶ Fig](#)

[▶ Table](#)

[▶ Table w controls](#)

Q Are **female judges** generally less likely to deny claims than **male judges**?

Female judges are less likely to deny abortions than male judges [▶ Return](#)

Q Are female judges observationally different (e.g., younger, less experienced)?

A NO.

[▶ Fig](#)

[▶ Table](#)

[▶ Table w controls](#)

Q Are female judges generally less likely to deny claims than male judges?

A NO. There is no gender gap in *non-abortion* decisions *for these same judges* [▶ Table](#)

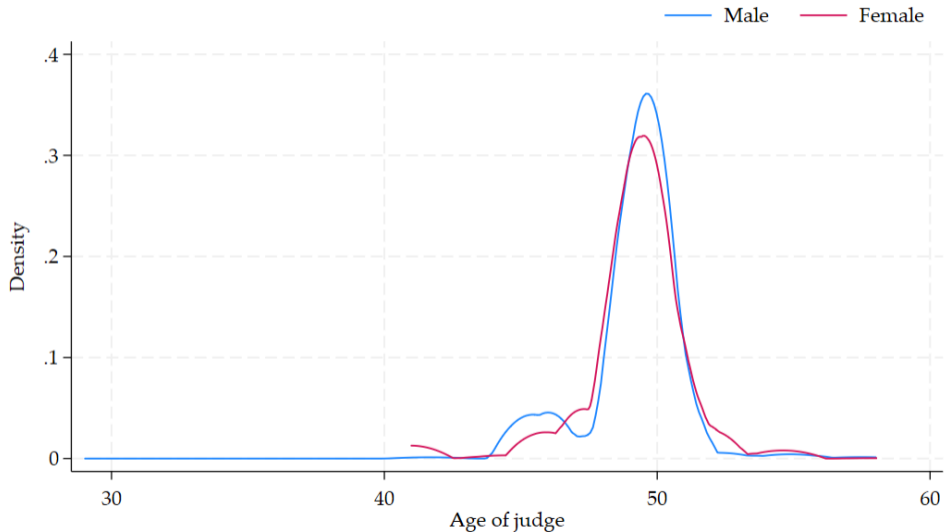
Female judges are less likely to deny women a wanted abortion [Return](#)

	Denies		Accepts		Declares inadmissible	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Female judge	-0.195 (0.013)	-0.185 (0.022)	0.145 (0.013)	0.132 (0.023)	0.050 (0.004)	0.053 (0.004)
Male judge mean	0.619		0.326		0.055	
Office-by-time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judge controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R2	0.044	0.045	0.023	0.027	0.011	0.012
N	19,759	19,759	19,759	19,759	19,759	19,759

	Male	Female	(1) - (2) <i>p</i> -value	(1) - (2) <i>p</i> -value w/ $\delta_{o(i)}$
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age	48.17	47.87	0.67	0.71
Law degree from selective college	0.35	0.25	0.20	0.84
College course repetition rate	0.12	0.11	0.44	0.13
Years since first claim	6.56	6.07	0.56	0.61
All claims handled	1817.21	1803.05	0.97	0.82
Abortion rights claims handled	168.71	145.40	0.49	0.27
N	68	57	125	

Distribution of judge age by judge gender

[Return](#)



Female judges are not less likely to reject *other* types of claims

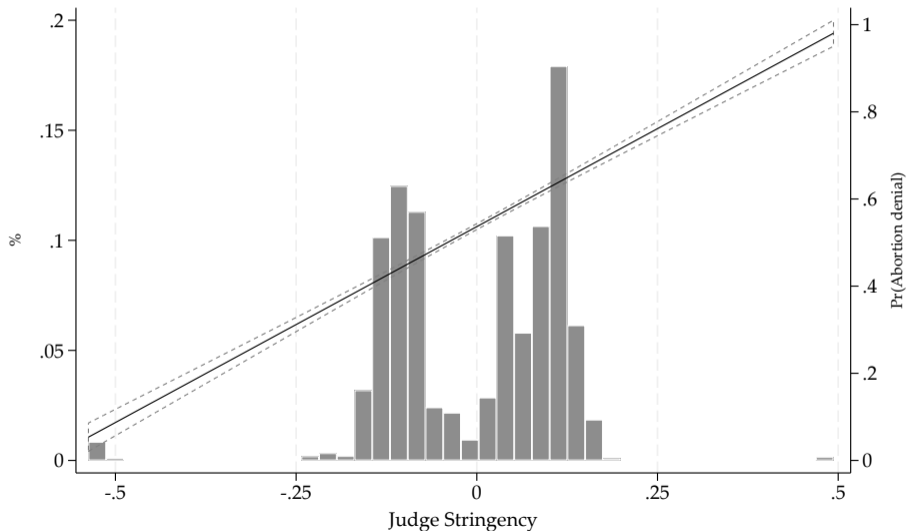
[Return](#)

	Health-related claims		Labor-related claims		Humanitarian aid claims		General petitions	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female judge	0.003 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	-0.027 (0.025)	-0.057 (0.031)	-0.013 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.006)	0.001 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)
Male judge mean	0.190		0.548		0.384		0.376	
Office-by-time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judge controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R2	0.004	0.004	0.077	0.081	0.008	0.008	0.002	0.002
N	44,603	44,603	1,424	1,424	29,299	29,299	83,442	83,442

Judge stringency

[▶ Return](#)

A 25 p.p. difference between P10 and P90 of judge stringency



	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)	N (3)
<i>Panel A: Match rate</i>			
Matched with SISBEN III	0.821	-0.042 (0.034)	19,759
Matched with SISBEN IV	0.726	-0.037 (0.037)	19,759
<i>Panel B: Conditional on filing abortion rights claims before SISBEN IV survey</i>			
Age in SISBEN IV	33.353	0.315 (1.175)	11,018
Age at abortion encounter	27.576	0.178 (1.165)	11,018

	Female Judge (1)	Judge Stringency (2)
γ	-0.195 (0.013)	0.899 (0.022)
N	19,759	19,734

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	Denied (2)	Female (3)	Judge Stringency (4)
Age at SISBEN III survey	22.131	0.104 (0.163)	-0.113 (0.228)	-0.006 (0.818)
Age at abortion encounter	28.294	0.103 (0.162)	-0.112 (0.227)	0.012 (0.818)
Teenager at abortion encounter	0.206	0.003 (0.007)	0.012 (0.009)	-0.031 (0.035)
No education	0.143	0.007 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.027)
Elementary	0.496	0.003 (0.009)	0.005 (0.010)	0.009 (0.038)
Middle school	0.137	-0.015 (0.007)	0.007 (0.007)	-0.037 (0.027)
High school	0.166	0.005 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.007)	0.029 (0.028)
Postsecondary	0.058	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.004 (0.016)
Wealth (SISBEN score)	41.623	-0.104 (0.403)	0.399 (0.388)	-1.892 (1.486)
Residential strata 0 or 1	0.285	0.000 (0.009)	0.011 (0.009)	-0.027 (0.036)
Household size	4.953	-0.025 (0.055)	0.072 (0.051)	-0.195 (0.207)
Has children	0.201	0.011 (0.009)	0.001 (0.007)	0.039 (0.039)
Number of children	0.301	0.012 (0.013)	-0.007 (0.012)	0.075 (0.056)
Single	0.362	-0.034 (0.010)	0.010 (0.008)	-0.033 (0.031)
Married or cohabitating	0.391	0.039 (0.010)	-0.013 (0.009)	0.044 (0.035)
Divorced or separated	0.129	-0.008 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	-0.023 (0.025)
Widowed	0.117	0.004 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.012 (0.017)
Lives in Medellin	0.914	-0.010 (0.006)	0.005 (0.005)	-0.016 (0.019)
Joint <i>F</i> -stat		3.237	1.469	1.338
<i>p</i> -value		0.000	0.126	0.196
<i>N</i>		11,128	11,128	11,104

Notes: All regressions include office-by-time fixed effects. Standard errors are shown in parentheses and are clustered at the judge level. Sample restricted to women filing abortion rights claims after June 2010.

Exclusion

▶ [Return](#)

Female judges do not have a direct effect on women's outcomes—only indirectly through abortion denial

- ▶ We only focus on cases related to abortion rights
 - ▶ Judges can only determine whether to accept, deny, or declare an abortion rights claim inadmissible—they do not influence other aspects of the abortion claim
 - ▶ Judges never directly interact with claimants
- ⇒ The lack of multidimensionality of judge discretion enables isolating the impact of abortion denial

Impacts on birth outcomes and baby characteristics

[▶ Return](#)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
<i>Panel A: Birth outcomes</i>		
First-time mother	0.432	0.225** (0.099)
C-section	0.296	0.258** (0.103)
Doctor not present	0.010	-0.019 (0.023)
<i>Panel B: Baby characteristics</i>		
Female	0.495	-0.003 (0.106)
1-min APGAR <7	0.041	-0.039 (0.044)
5-min APGAR <7	0.013	0.003 (0.022)
Low birth weight (<2500g)	0.087	0.166** (0.066)
<i>Gestational weeks</i>		
< 27 weeks	0.002	-0.011 (0.015)
27-32 weeks	0.013	0.054 (0.031)
32-37 weeks	0.208	0.016 (0.092)
38+ weeks	0.781	-0.023 (0.096)
Filed claim	18.433	5.246*** (1.665)

Notes: This table presents the impact of denying a wanted abortion on birth outcomes and baby characteristics for about 7,000 births occurring within nine months of the mother filing an abortion rights claim. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Mortality within 9 months by cause of death

[▶ Return](#)

	Pregnant in SISBEN IV (1)	Non-Denied (2)
Mortality rate	0.579%	1.562%
<i>By cause of death</i>		
Septicemia and infections	0.003%	0.317%
Obstetric causes	0.051%	0.120%
Other health-related	0.351%	0.972%
External	0.174%	0.240%

Labor-force participation

[▶ Return](#)

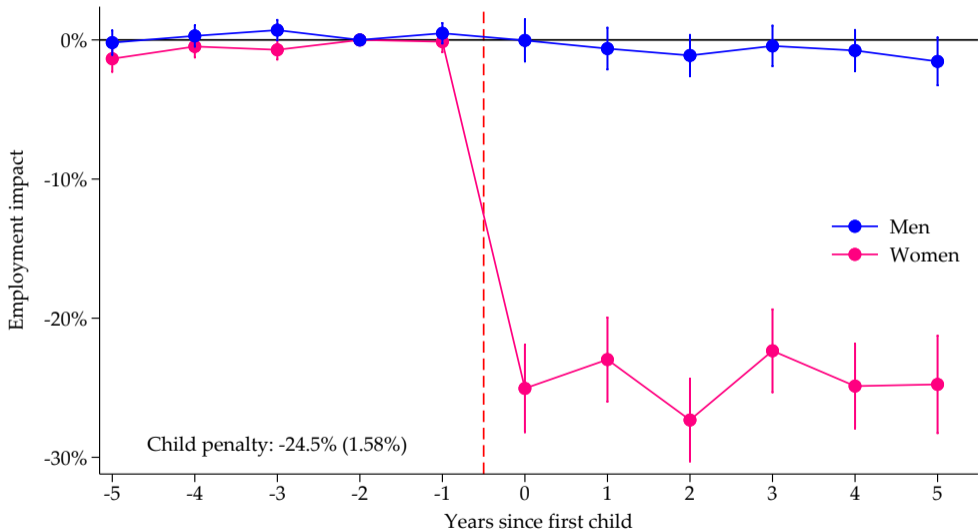
	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Employed	0.194	-0.106*** (0.036)
Self-employment	0.076	-0.052*** (0.020)
Domestic worker	0.030	-0.031** (0.013)
Private sector employment	0.069	-0.013 (0.016)
Public sector employment	0.009	-0.005 (0.007)
Non-remunerated worker	0.002	0.004 (0.004)
Other employment type	0.008	-0.009 (0.007)
Looking for job	0.047	-0.047*** (0.017)
Homemaker	0.558	0.122*** (0.048)
No activity	0.074	0.085*** (0.030)
Unable to work due to permanent disability	0.042	0.005 (0.019)
Student	0.047	0.008 (0.018)

Notes: These outcomes are realized nearly six years after women file an abortion rights claim, when they are about 33 years old. Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Residential strata 0 or 1	0.306	0.129*** (0.049)
Residential strata 2 or 3	0.666	-0.117** (0.051)
Residential strata 4, 5, or 6	0.008	0.002 (0.010)
Extreme poverty (Group A)	0.113	-0.036 (0.031)
Moderate poverty (Group B)	0.283	0.223*** (0.046)
Vulnerability (Group C)	0.441	-0.099* (0.052)
Not poor and not vulnerable (Group D)	0.163	-0.088** (0.041)
Incidence of multidimensional poverty	0.265	0.191*** (0.045)

Notes: Sample restricted to 11,018 women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

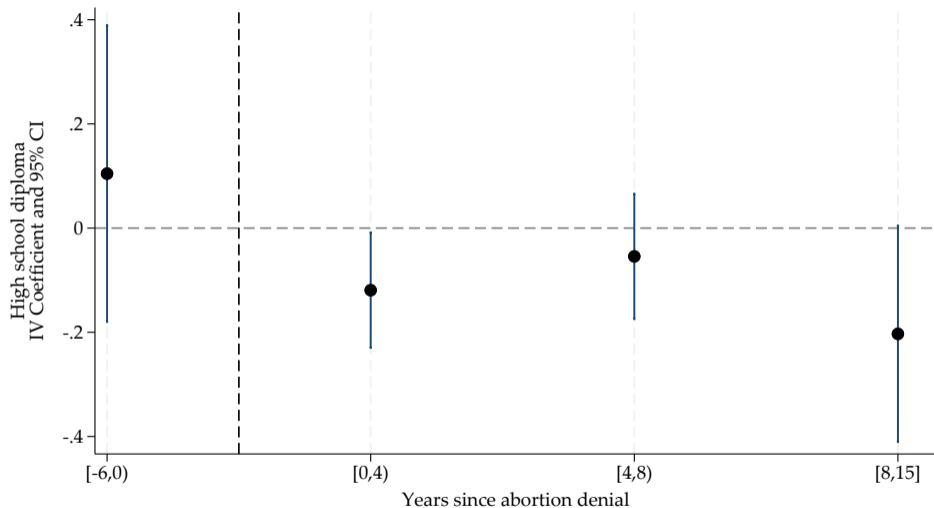
Child penalty is half the size of penalty following abortion denial



Notes: This figure presents an event study of first child birth for individuals in SISBEN IV living in Medellin, using the methodology outlined by Kleven et al. (2024).

Persistent impacts: high school diploma

▶ Return

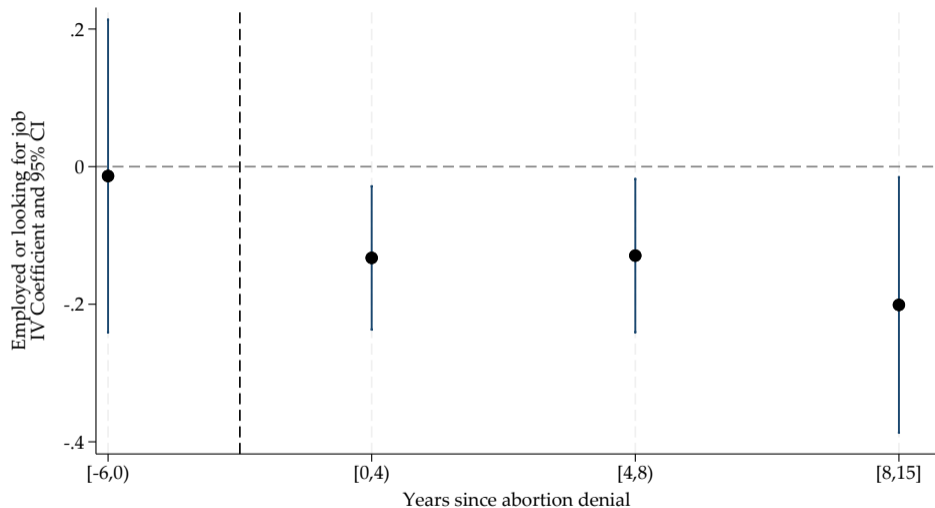


Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

Persistent impacts: labor-force participation

▶ Child penalty

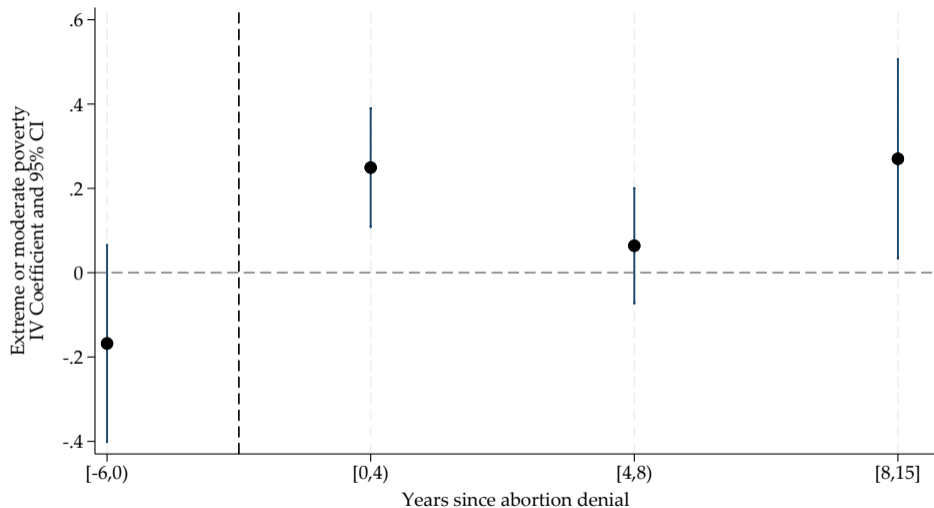
▶ Return



Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

Persistent impacts: extreme or moderate poverty

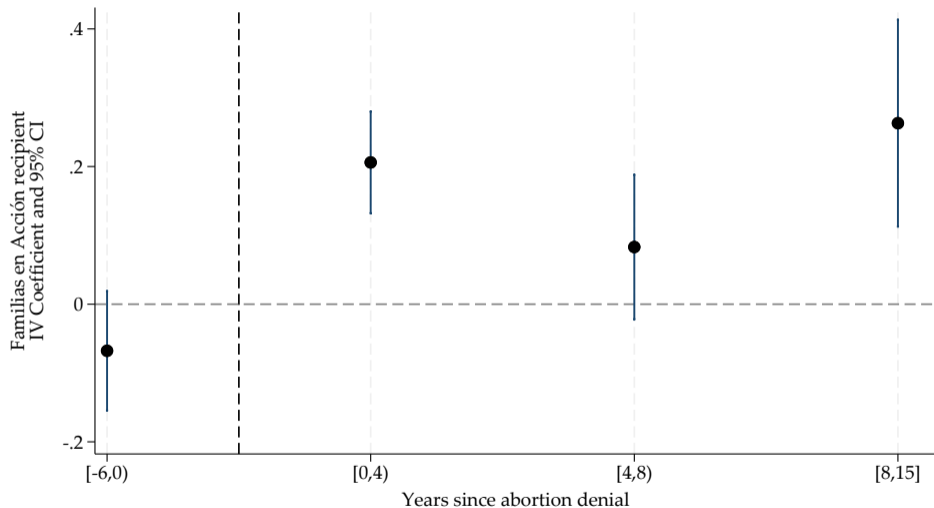
[Return](#)



Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

Persistent impacts: welfare assistance

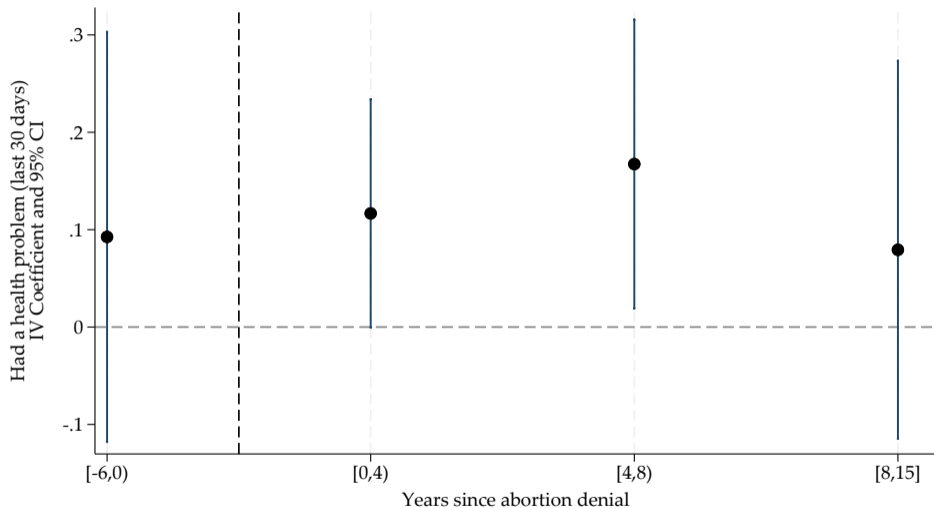
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Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

Persistent impacts: health

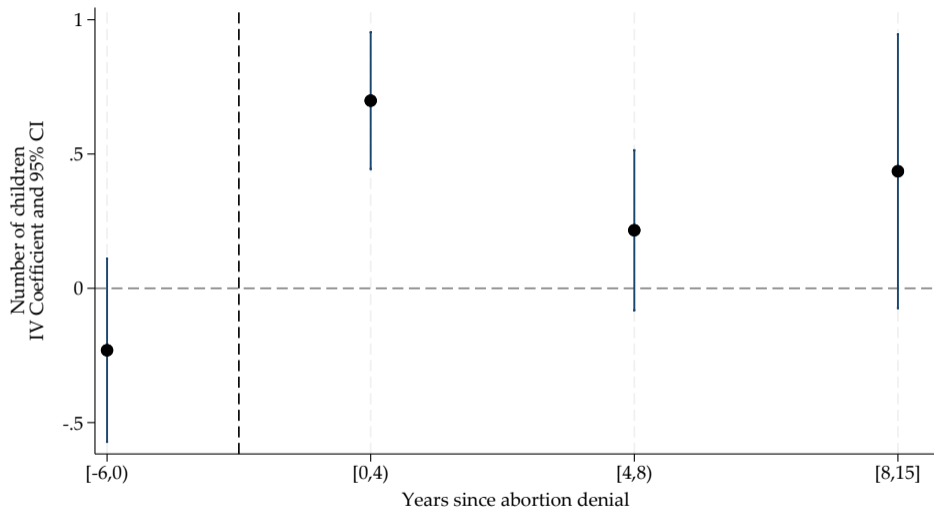
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Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

Persistent impacts: number of children

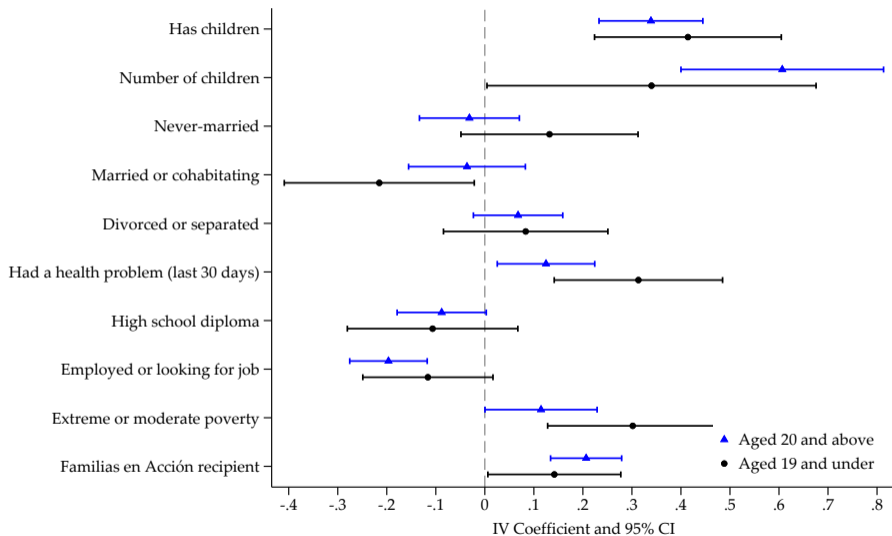
[Return](#)



Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with the woman's age and age squared at the time of the survey. The sample includes 14,542 women in SISBEN IV filing abortion rights claims between 2006 and 2022.

The impacts are worse for pregnant teenagers

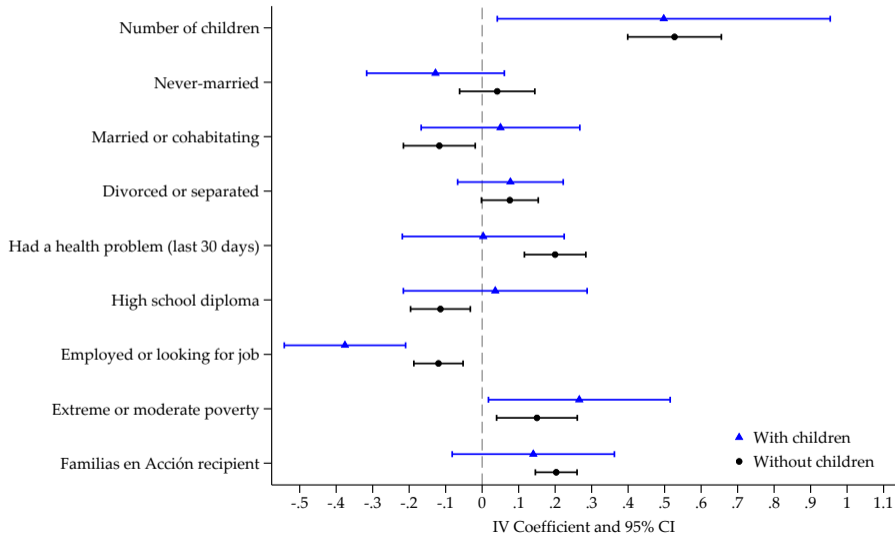
[Return](#)



Notes: This figure augments Specification (1) with bins of years since the survey.

Worsened health for childless women, larger LFP drop for mothers

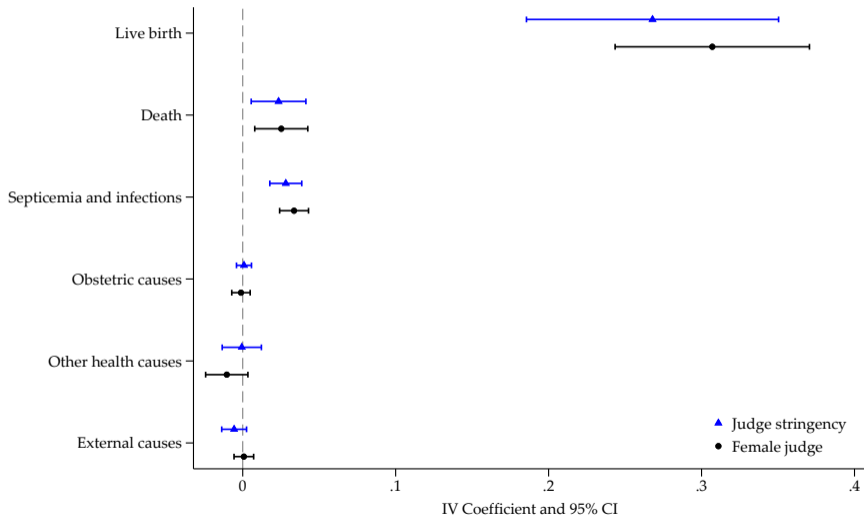
▶ Return



Robustness using judge stringency

[Return](#)

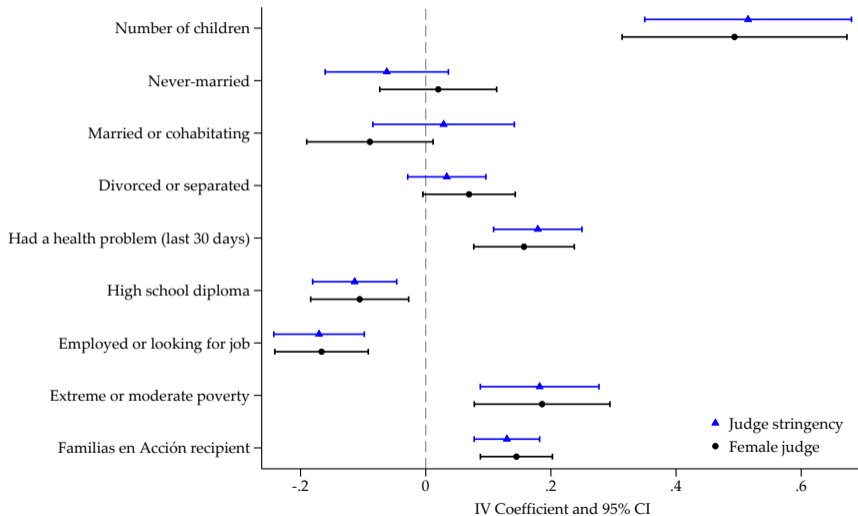
Immediate childbearing and mortality



Robustness using judge stringency

[Return](#)

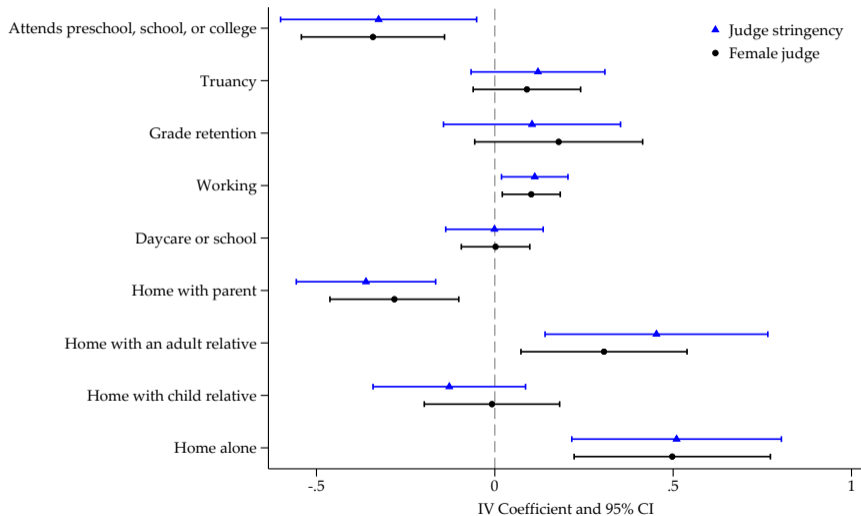
Long-term outcomes for women



Robustness using judge stringency

[Return](#)

Long-term outcomes for children



Intergenerational effects: older child's health

[▶ Return](#)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
Had a health problem (last 30 days)	0.090	0.052 (0.058)
Sought healthcare (last 30 days)	0.073	0.061 (0.056)

Notes: The sample is restricted to the 2,317 youngest existing child of women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Their average age was 5.5 at the time of the abortion rights claim and 12 at the time of the survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

Existing child's highest grade attained

[▶ Return](#)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
None	0.407	-0.078 (0.099)
Kindergarten	0.010	0.028 (0.032)
First grade	0.329	0.144 (0.102)
Second grade	0.011	0.073*** (0.025)
Third grade	0.005	-0.012 (0.016)
Fourth grade	0.009	-0.030** (0.015)
Fifth grade	0.009	-0.012 (0.022)
Sixth grade	0.024	0.028 (0.043)
Seventh grade	0.022	-0.012 (0.035)
Eight grade	0.009	0.016 (0.022)
Ninth grade	0.052	-0.080 (0.049)
Tenth grade	0.054	-0.064 (0.062)
Eleventh grade	0.013	-0.042 (0.030)
Twelfth grade	0.017	0.003 (0.026)
Postsecondary	0.030	0.023 (0.030)

Notes: The outcome is the highest grade of educational attainment, renamed to resemble a K–12 system. The sample is restricted to the 2,317 youngest existing child of women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.

	Above-median age		Below-median age	
	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)	Non-Denied Mean (3)	IV (4)
<i>Panel A: Age</i>				
Age at time of SISBEN survey	15.130	0.789 (0.857)	8.208	-0.205 (0.677)
Age at time of abortion claim	6.809	-0.046 (0.732)	3.876	0.076 (0.648)
<i>Panel B: School attendance and child labor</i>				
Attends preschool, school, or college	0.706	-0.442** (0.231)	0.867	-0.163 (0.111)
Truancy	0.092	0.087 (0.141)	0.118	0.051 (0.105)
Grade retention	0.444	0.095 (0.185)	0.537	0.252 (0.158)
Working	0.038	0.118 (0.079)	0.009	0.084 (0.082)
First stage		-0.157 (0.035)		-0.195 (0.029)
<i>N</i>	1,212		1,091	
<i>Panel C: During the weekdays, where does the child usually stay and with whom?</i>				
Home with parent	0.299	-0.304*** (0.121)	0.317	-0.247* (0.126)
Home with an adult relative	0.048	0.477*** (0.143)	0.097	0.246 (0.228)
Home with child relative	0.162	-0.200 (0.143)	0.166	0.152 (0.185)
Home alone	0.365	0.464*** (0.216)	0.214	0.306 (0.198)
First stage		-0.235 (0.048)		-0.210 (0.066)
<i>N</i>	458		425	

All existing children

[▶ Return](#)

	Non-Denied Mean (1)	IV (2)
<i>Panel A: School attendance and child labor</i>		
Attends preschool, school, or college	0.759	-0.252** (0.127)
Truancy	0.122	-0.001 (0.082)
Grade retention	0.538	0.154 (0.121)
Analphabetic	0.143	-0.117 (0.092)
Working	0.033	0.051 (0.054)
<i>Panel B: During the weekdays, where does the child usually stay and with whom?</i>		
Daycare or school	0.034	0.007 (0.041)
Home with parent	0.345	-0.262*** (0.084)
Home with an adult relative	0.056	0.324*** (0.115)
Home with child relative	0.164	-0.031 (0.093)
Home alone	0.279	0.494*** (0.130)

Notes: This table presents the effects of denying a woman a wanted abortion on the outcomes of all of her children born *before* filing the abortion rights claim. The sample is restricted to 3,063 children of women filing abortion rights claims before the SISBEN IV survey. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level.