

(re)conceptualising abortion safety: centering lived realities

drawing on data from Karnataka, India (2017)

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May 2022



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



SAFE



LEGAL



RARE

ABORTION X SAFETY

not a binary but
a continuum &
traverses a
spectrum of risk

(Ganatra et al, 2014;
Sedgh et al, 2016)

quality of care:
'[...]safe, delivering
health care that
minimizes risks
and harm to
service users (13; p.
9)

(WHO, 2022)

carried out using
a WHO-approved
method,
appropriate to
gestational age
& necessary skills

(WHO, 2022)

SAFETY (& RISK) AS SOCIAL?

CENTRING ABORTION SEEKERS' LIVED REALITIES



Janani

- ❖ Age: ±40, married, three children (4, 8, 11 years)
- ❖ Pregnancy confirmation: six weeks via UPT
- ❖ Abortion obtained: seven weeks
- ❖ Abortion method: self-managed MA
- ❖ Delay: n/a

Janani

*"If it doesn't work, I will tell **[a specific ASHA]** sister and she will tell me which doctor to talk to. But, I know they will work. I had guarantee [confidence]."*

"It's disgusting, they will say. As after so many years of marriage, I got pregnant again. If I continue to get pregnant, they'll ask 'Can't she control herself?'. At my age, to get pregnant again <shakes head, long pause>. They will speak badly. [...] 'Her husband is like this [alcoholic], what will she end up doing in the future?' 'She's so old now, why does she need children?' and so it becomes disgusting like this."

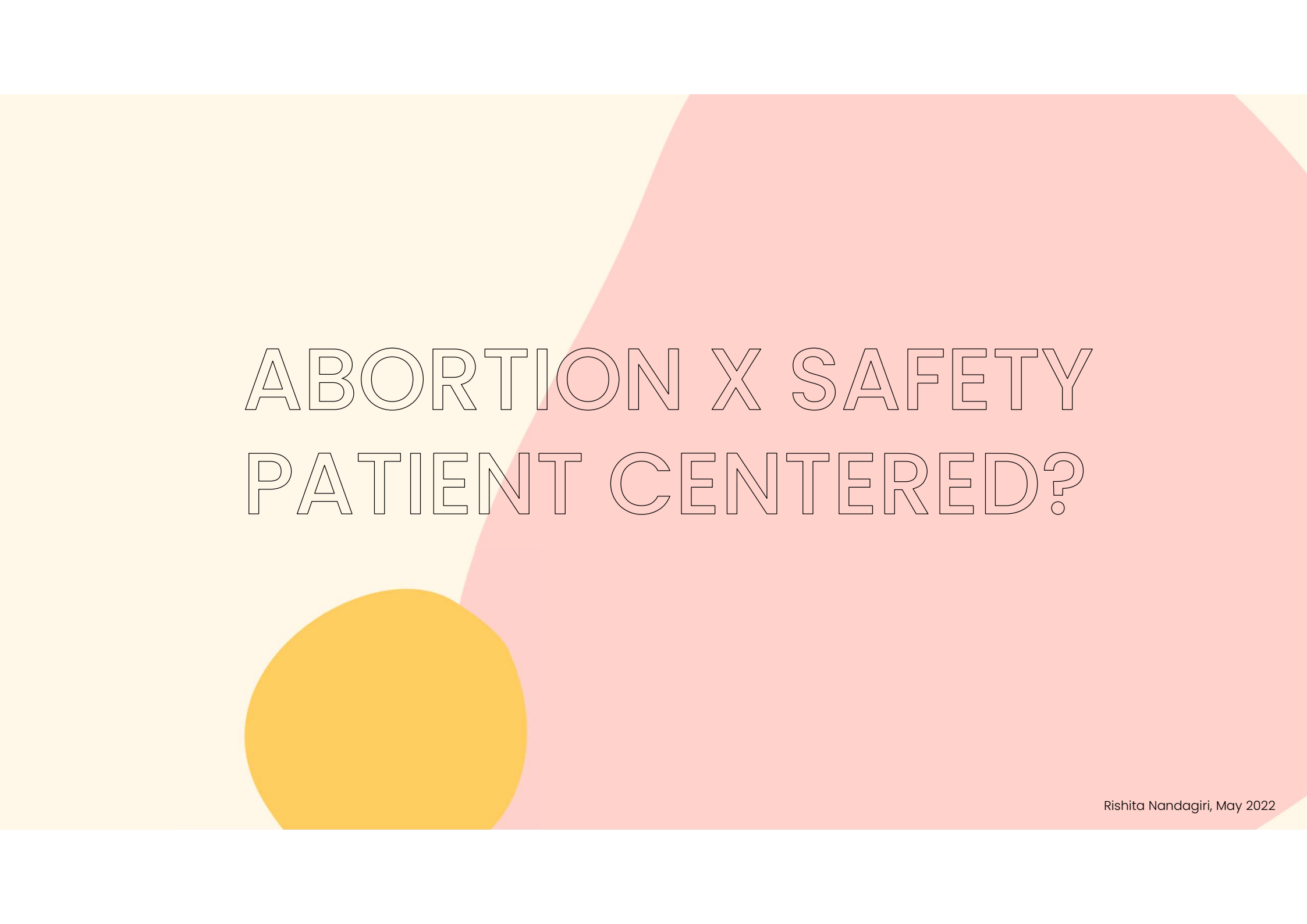
Rajalakshmi

- ❖ Age 23, two children (6 years old, and 2 years old)
- ❖ Pregnancy confirmation: six weeks via UPT
- ❖ Abortion obtained: 12 weeks
- ❖ Abortion method: self-managed abortion (?)
- ❖ Delay: 5 weeks

Rajalakshmi

“Madam signed and gave one thing has been written in this, see- <shows referral note>. Go to [district hospital], she wrote. After going there, he [doctor] wasn’t there first time. [...]

Second time, he saw the note and told me that because my previous delivery was caesarean section, an abortion can be a threat to my life and it shouldn’t be done. He said he has a private clinic and he asked me to come there instead. When he said private clinic, I got scared then- how much money they will take? First of all, at mother’s home also they are poor, there they cannot give [money], and then at husband’s home also they don’t give. He also drinks, so at home there is no money. If the bill is heavy, what shall I do? I phoned ASHA again. She said we will do something, come here [PHC]. And then I phoned my mother, she said don’t do anything- come here [natal village], and take pill only, so going there only I took the pills.”



ABORTION X SAFETY PATIENT CENTERED?

please do get in touch:

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THANK YOU!