

# Changes in Mexicans' abortion and emergency contraception (EC) knowledge and attitudes: 2000 to 2006

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# Overview

- ◆ Changing legal context in Mexico
- ◆ Importance of abortion opinion research
- ◆ Key findings from the 2000 and 2006 national public opinion surveys
- ◆ Next steps
- ◆ Policy implications

# Abortion in Mexico

- ◆ In region with the highest rates of unsafe abortion worldwide and the strictest abortion laws
- ◆ Unsafe abortion is 5th leading cause of maternal mortality<sup>1</sup> (6-7% of all maternal deaths)
- ◆ Ongoing access barriers to safe abortion

(1) Source: INEGI/DGI 2006

# Changing legal context for abortion in Mexico

- ◆ Abortion laws vary by state; legal in all states in case of rape
- ◆ Strong influence of Catholic Church
- ◆ The “Paulina Case” spotlighted gross negation of legal abortion
- ◆ Greater legislator accountability to public since 2000
- ◆ Watershed law passed in April 07’ legalizing first trimester abortions in México City

# Changing legal context for EC in Mexico

- ◆ EC added to national family planning norms in 2004
- ◆ 5 dedicated EC products
- ◆ Mexico designated model country by the International Consortium for EC
- ◆ Long trajectory of evidence based research and training
- ◆ Ongoing ambivalence and misinformation about EC

# Importance of public opinion research on abortion

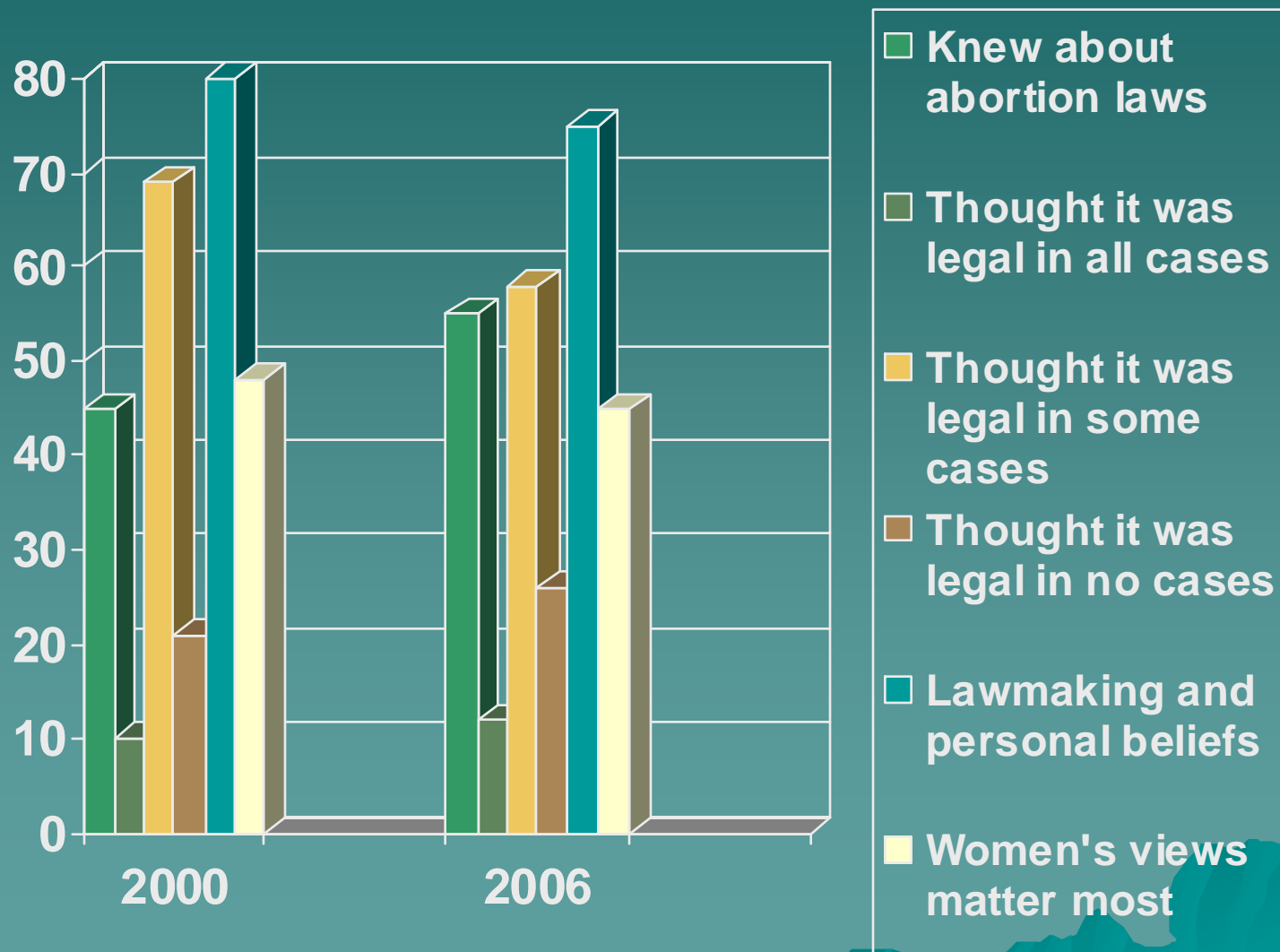
- ◆ Can be a powerful advocacy tool for abortion-law reform
- ◆ Mexicans appear to support legal abortion in some cases but ambivalence persists
- ◆ Abortion opinions vary by age, gender, education, rural/urban residence
- ◆ Instrument design can influence results

# National public opinion surveys: 2000 and 2006

- ◆ First nationally representative surveys in Mexico (rural/urban)
- ◆ 2000: n= 3,000 ages 15-65, +/-1.82%<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 2006: n= 3,513 ages 15-65, +/- 2.00%<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Household surveys, 60-70 questions
- ◆ 2000 survey focused on abortion and EC
- ◆ 2006 survey included broader health topics, e.g. medical abortion and HIV

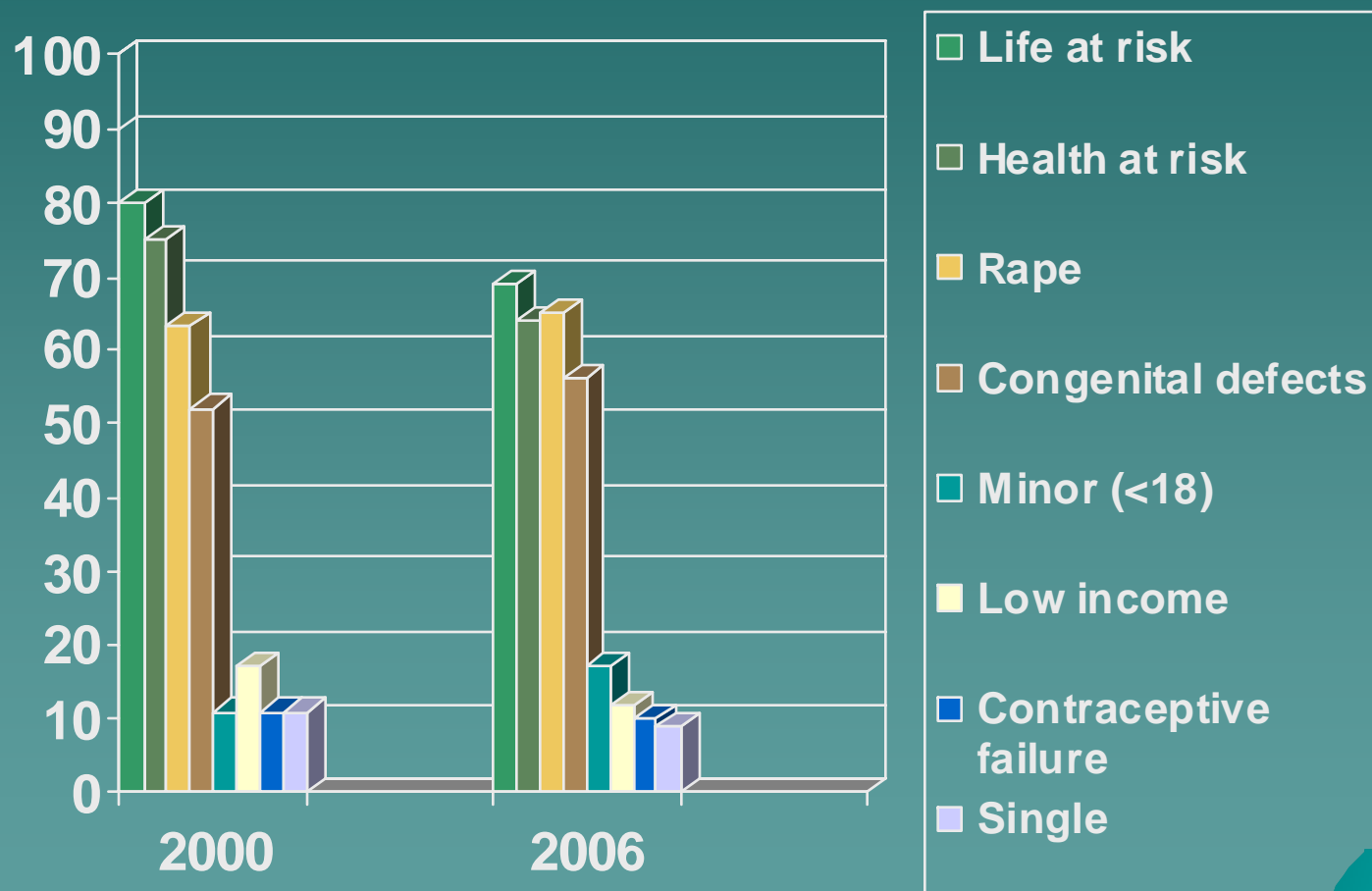
(1) Garcia et al.,2004 (2) Garcia et al., in progress

# Key findings from 2000 and 2006

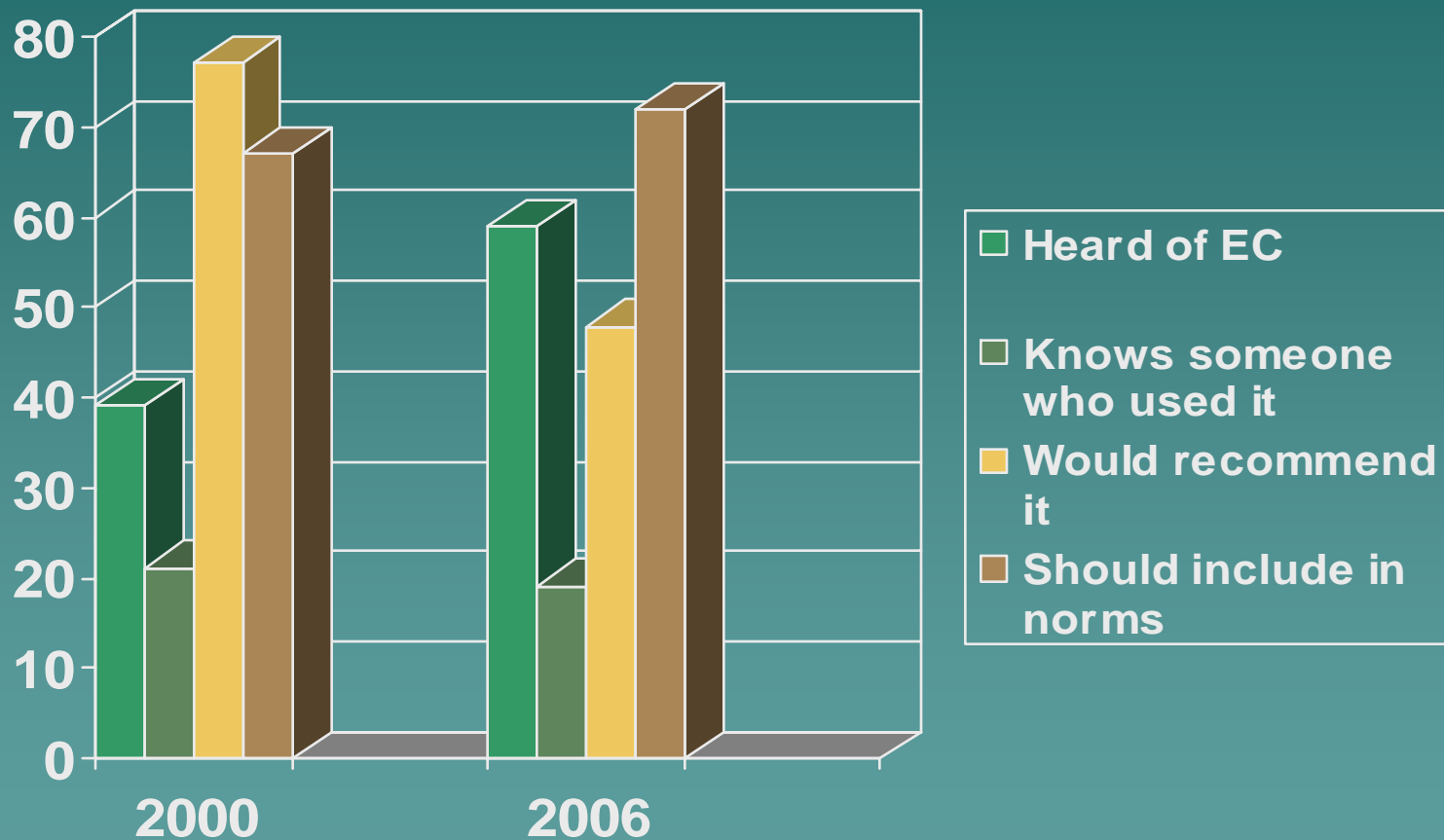




# Key findings from 2000 and 2006 (2)



# Key findings from 2000 and 2006 (3)



# Additional key findings from 2006

- ◆ Health problems when abortion should be legal:
  - HIV (62%), cancer (52%), alcoholism (43%)
  - Diabetes (33%), suicidal thoughts (21%), severe depression (20%)
- ◆ More education, less religious attendance significantly associated with:
  - More support for legal abortion in general and in specific cases
  - Belief that legislators should consider women's views most when making abortion laws

# Additional key findings from 2006 (2)

- ◆ 8% had heard of misoprostol
- ◆ 65% of them knew it could be used to induce abortion
- ◆ Majority thought the government should:
  - have anti-discrimination laws for people with HIV/AIDS (83%)
  - provide free medications (88%)
- ◆ Less support for people with HIV/AIDS to marry (49%) and adopt children (34%)

# Key trends between surveys

- ◆ Increased knowledge of abortion laws in one's own state in 06' compared to 00'
- ◆ Increased support for legal abortion in some cases but decreased support in others in 06'
- ◆ Greater overall EC knowledge, use, and support in 06'

# Results from surveys in Mexico City

- ◆ Two representative surveys in Mexico City
- ◆ April and May, 2007 (n= 800 each)
- ◆ Divided opinion over new law, but slightly more support once law passed (46% vs. 43%)
- ◆ 64% thought legislators should consider women's views most when making abortion laws
- ◆ 60% wanted law passed in all of Mexico
- ◆ Over 90% supported other reforms in law

# Next Steps

- ◆ Further analysis of 2000 and 2006 data
- ◆ State level opinion surveys
- ◆ Surveys among key groups, e.g. lawyers
- ◆ Collaboration with Mexico partners on media campaigns and provider trainings

# Policy implications

- ◆ Continued trend of mixed opinion on abortion
  - Strong disapproval of Church involvement
- ◆ Public appears to favor legal abortion in more cases than state laws allow
- ◆ Strong research base and advocacy efforts
- ◆ Model legislation in Mexico City
- ◆ Collaborative efforts to improve public awareness and access



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- ◆ Survey participants, 2000, 2006, and 2007

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