

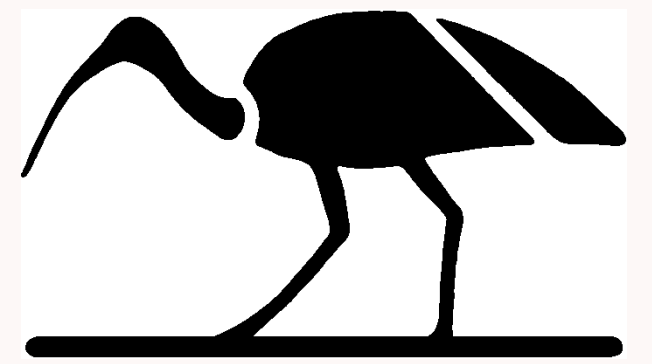
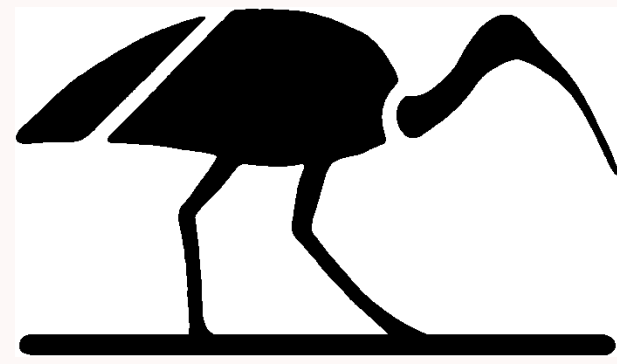
# Low-Income Women's Experiences Seeking Funding for Abortion and Opinions about Medicaid Coverage for Abortion

## A Qualitative Investigation

Amanda Dennis, Ruth Manski, Kelly Blanchard

Cambridge, MA, United States

[www.ibisreproductivehealth.org](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)



### OVERVIEW

#### Background

- In 1976, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, prohibiting federal Medicaid funding for abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment.
- The majority of states (34) ban the use of state Medicaid funding for abortion except in the circumstances outlined by the Hyde Amendment.
- Low-income women are three times as likely to obtain an abortion as women with higher incomes.
- Lack of Medicaid coverage of abortion can lead to delays in obtaining desired abortions or force women to continue unwanted pregnancies.

#### Methods

- Aimed to investigate low-income women's experiences seeking funding for abortion, as well as opinions about Medicaid coverage of abortion.
- Recruited a convenience sample of women through online postings in community based websites.
- Conducted 71 semi-structured, in-depth telephone interviews with low-income women who obtained abortions in **Arizona** and **Florida**, states with consistently poor track records of Medicaid funding for abortion, and women who obtained abortions in **New York** and **Oregon**, where state Medicaid funding for abortion is available
- Analyzed in-depth interview data using ATLAS.ti.

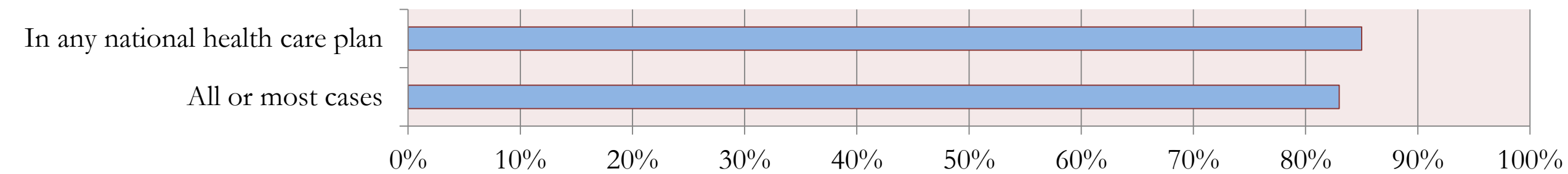
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### RESULTS

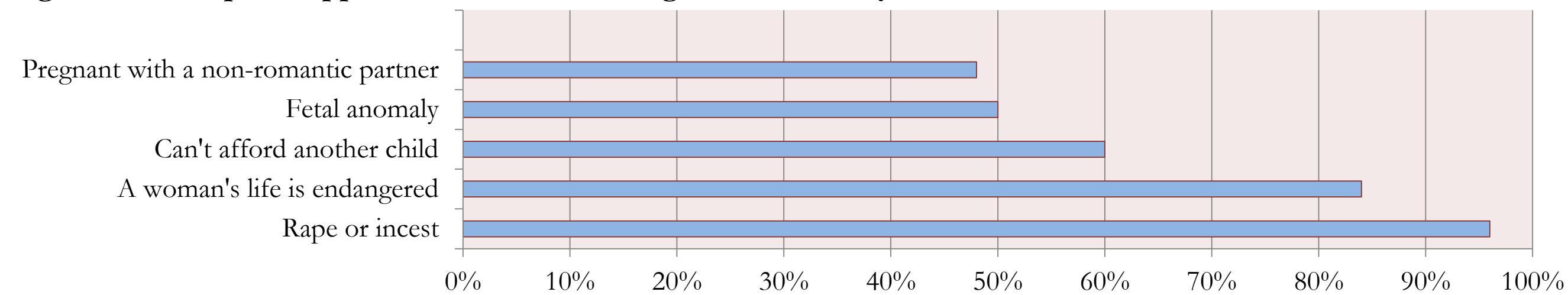
Most participants said they supported Medicaid covering abortion for low-income women in all cases or supported inclusion of abortion coverage in a national health care plan.

**Figure 1. Participant support of Medicaid coverage of abortion in all or most cases or in a national health plan**



Yet, when probed about coverage in specific scenarios, opinions about Medicaid coverage often changed.

**Figure 2. Participant support of Medicaid coverage of abortion by scenario**



Women who consistently supported Medicaid coverage of abortion believed in a woman's right to determine for herself if abortion was the best option, and that the decision should not be up to Medicaid. Sophie, a 27 year-old white woman residing in Oregon, was underemployed and had depression and anorexia at the time of her abortion. After getting drunk and cutting herself several times during the pregnancy, she obtained a Medicaid-covered abortion. Sophie said she strongly supported Medicaid coverage for abortion: "Just being in the situation that I was in and not having any money...I can only imagine other women in that same situation...How do you come up with \$800 right on the spot?"

However, many women were conflicted about Medicaid coverage, and their opinions about scenarios when coverage should be available were inconsistent with their own experiences. Adriana, a 29 year-old Latina residing in New York, had recently separated from her husband when she found out she was pregnant. She terminated her pregnancy because she did not have the financial resources or support to raise another child. Medicaid covered her abortion. While Adriana also acknowledged that without Medicaid she would have been forced to carry the pregnancy to term, she did not believe that Medicaid should cover abortion: "There's a lot of people that just get pregnant... and they think it's like a game. They just go and get an abortion since it's easy to do it."

### CONCLUSIONS

Most women reported they support Medicaid coverage of abortion in all or most cases, or under a national health plan. Women's feelings about their own experiences obtaining abortions seemed to influence their opinions about other women obtaining Medicaid coverage. We are conducting further analyses to identify patterns and explanatory variables that may account for the reduction in support of Medicaid coverage of abortion in certain cases.

**Table 1. Participant Characteristics**

<b>State of residence, number (%)</b>	
Arizona	16 (23)
Florida	20 (28)
New York	20 (28)
Oregon	15 (21)
<b>Age, mean (range)</b>	30 (18-55)
<b>Latina, number (%)</b>	
Yes	16 (23)
No	55 (77)
<b>Race, number (%)</b>	
American Indian	2 (3)
Asian	2 (3)
Black or African American	6 (8)
White	49 (69)
Two or more races	2 (3)
Other	10 (14)
<b># of abortions, number (range)</b>	1 (1-3)
<b>Gestation of most recent abortion, mean (range)</b>	8 (2-24) LMP
<b>Cost of most recent abortion, mean (range)</b>	\$503 (\$200-\$1500)
<b>Source of payment for most recent abortion, mean (range)*</b>	
Abortion fund	2 (3)
Clinic discount	10 (14)
Friend or family help	33 (47)
Out-of-pocket	42 (59)
Private insurance	2 (3)
Public insurance	20 (28)

\*As multiple sources were used, will not add up to 100%