

## Summary

# On the Line: Insights from a Mixed Methods Study of the RRAAM Hotline from 2021 to 2023

This report follows from **RRAAM hotline research in 2020**, seeking insight into the experiences of hotline users and para-counselors in seeking and providing information on safe abortion access in Malaysia between January 2021 and December 2023.

Lead Researcher:  
Amanda Tiew,  
Siti Fatimah binti Kamis

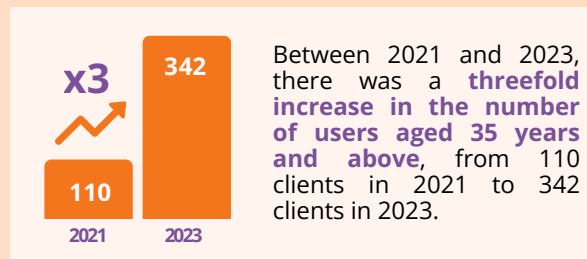
Research team:  
Ashley Phun,  
Fara Rom,  
Yunishaa Loga

## Key Facts & Findings

### Structural Barriers to Access

Although **legally permissible through The Penal Code Section 312**, access to abortion in Malaysia remains impeded by structural barriers, such as:

- A widespread lack of regulation and information, leading to a higher risk of exploitation and variability.
- Significantly fewer service providers outside of urban areas and sensitized service providers overall.
- De-registration of medical abortion pills, leading to a higher risk of scams and/or misuse.



Many cited **medical issues, poor pregnancy spacing, and economic constraints** as the most common factors in their decision to have an abortion.

### Navigating Stigma

Internal and external stigma remains one of the most significant challenges for people seeking abortion access and care in Malaysia.

The pervasive stigma surrounding abortion calls for stigma-free and non-judgmental avenues for providing abortion services and care.

### Services Outside of Abortion

Users with minimal knowledge of reproductive processes sought the hotline out as a source of sexuality education.

For non-abortion related issues, users often enquired about **where and how to seek sexual and reproductive healthcare services, such as contraceptive access and STI treatment, with a priority for non-judgmental service providers.**

### Shifting Demographics



### The Role of the Hotline and Increasing Its Capacity

The **full-time hiring of the RRAAM coordinator in 2022** led to an **86% increase in hotline users.**

For many users, **the hotline was the first and only source of accurate and non-judgmental information about safe abortion access** that they encountered.

## Recommendations

- **Sustain and scale national abortion support infrastructures** - Provision of sustained funding for community-based, nation-wide initiatives such as the RRAAM hotline allows for more widespread access to life-saving, stigma-free information and support.
- **Reform legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks** - Re-register abortion pills to mitigate risks from unregulated online vendors and scammers and address regulatory gaps that continue to cause vulnerability to exploitation.
- **Strengthen access to CSE for all** - Implement robust comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programs to equip individuals and communities with knowledge regarding reproductive choices to prevent unintended pregnancy and baby dumping.
- **Challenge stigma and bias through a holistic SRHR approach** - Shift towards a reproductive justice approach that affirms the autonomy, choice, and dignity of abortion seekers and addresses the unmet need for non-judgmental SRHR services across all demographics.

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For more information: