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BACKGROUND

- U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* the Constitution does not grant women the right to abortion.
- Abortion - one of the most common medical procedures in the U.S.
- Half of all women will seek an abortion in their lifetimes.
- Despite criticisms, abortions are safe and have been shown to help women.
- Higher maternal mortality rates seen in areas that limit abortion; risk of death from childbirth is 14 times greater than that from a legal abortion.
- Regardless of specialty, the religion of the provider greatly determined whether the physician provided abortion services.
- Insufficient abortion training may dissuade a provider from performing an abortion when practicing.
- Current medical education for future physicians regarding abortion is decreasing over time, and many students want more training.

OBJECTIVE

To investigate the factors that influence medical students' attitudes about abortion, specifically, knowledge about abortion, religiosity, sex, and certain ideologies about abortion.

METHODS

- Cross-sectional, correlational design using an anonymous, online survey of osteopathic medical students at NSU.
- Included validated scales to measure their abortion knowledge, religiosity, and attitudes about abortion and sample characteristics.
 - Centrality of Religiosity Scale (5-items)
 - Abortion Knowledge (9 items)
 - Attitudes About Abortion and Varying Attitude Structures scale (20 items)
- Data collected Oct-Dec 2022 using REDCap.
- Speakman rank correlation and linear multiple regression used for hypothesis testing.
- Analysis explored the contributions of personal characteristics, i.e., group affiliation ("pro-choice" or "pro-life"), abortion knowledge, importance of religion in one's life, and religiosity) to attitudes toward abortion in osteopathic medical students.

RESULTS

- Total 413 completed cases; 65% (n = 251) women
- Mean age = 25.8 years (SD = 2.96; range = 21-45 years)

Table 1. Frequencies of students by year in school

year	n	%
1	41	34.1
2	118	28.5
3	91	22.0
4	63	15.3

- Only about half of the sample reported abortion was discussed in classes or during clinical rotations

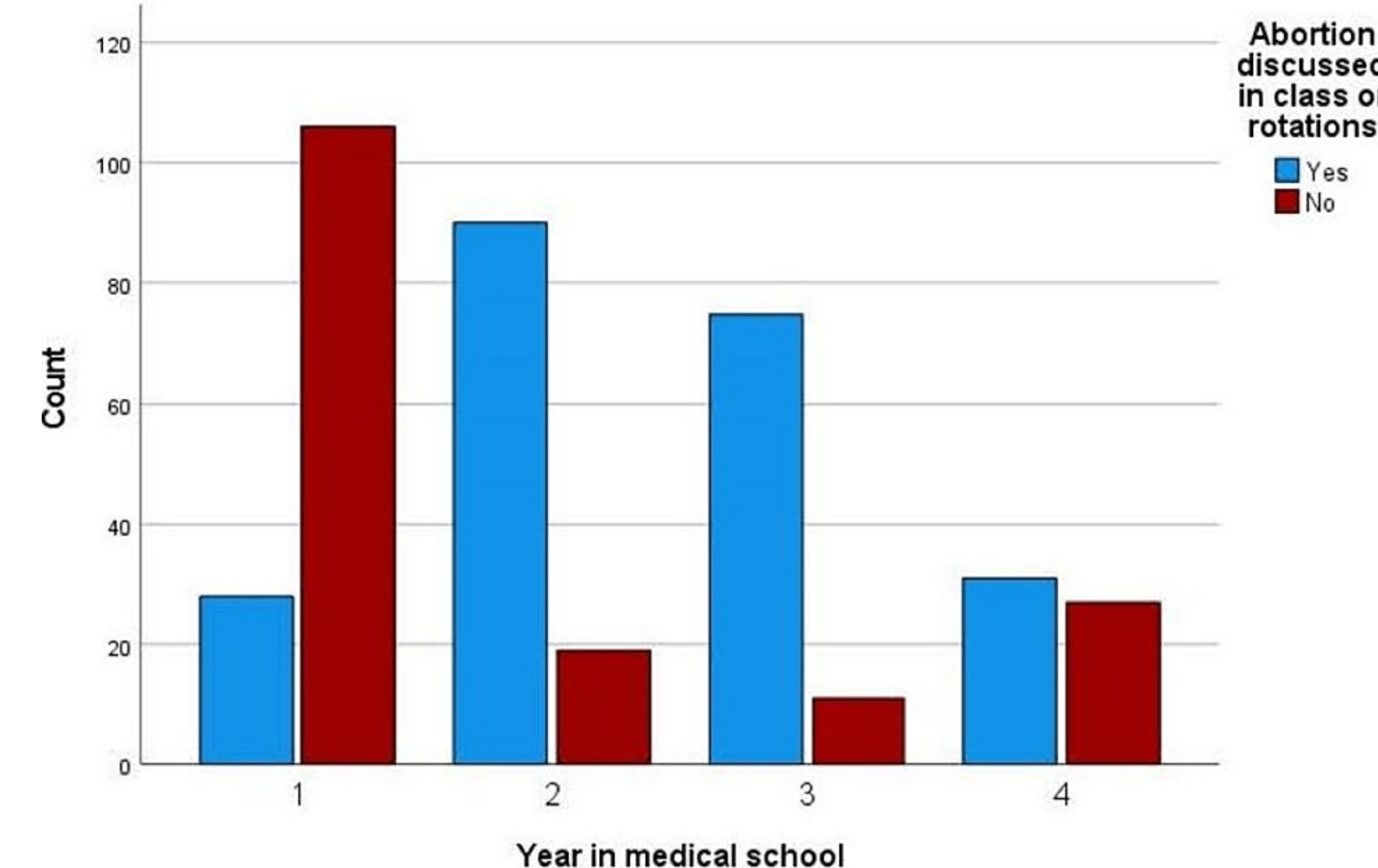


Figure 1. Abortion being discussed during medical school by year

- About one-fourth of the sample reported they received training in abortion practices, indications, or procedures.

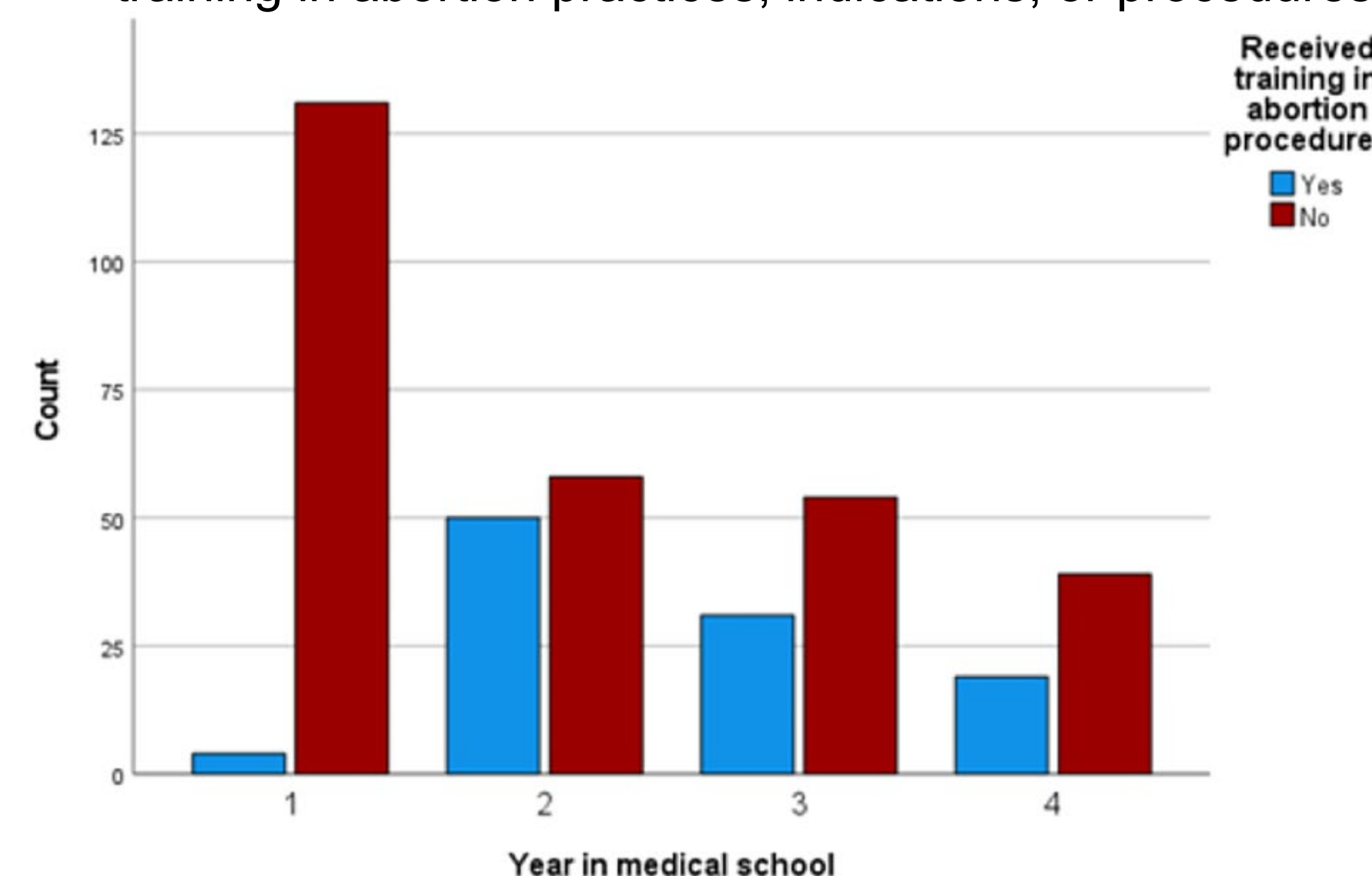


Figure 2. Students who received training in abortion practices, indications, or procedures

RESULTS

- Mean score for Abortion Attitudes scale = 4.67 (on a scale of 1 to 6); higher scores indicate more positive attitudes toward abortion
- Mean score for Religiosity Scale = 3.0 (on a scale of 1 to 5); higher scores indicate higher levels of religiosity.
- Mean score for Abortion Knowledge scale = 7.43; higher scores indicate greater levels of abortion knowledge.
- Mean score for single item *How important is religion in your life?* = 2.44 (on a scale of 1 to 4); higher scores indicate less importance of religion in their life.

Table 2. Regression model for predicting abortion attitudes

	B	SE	β	t	p-value
(Constant)	19.635	4.824		4.070	0.000**
Religiosity (scale)	1.099	0.280	0.268	3.925	0.000**
Abortion knowledge (scale)	3.677	0.425	0.298	8.646	0.000**
Sex (M/F)	8.002	1.660	0.161	4.821	0.000**
Pro-choice vs. Pro-life	21.596	1.961	0.395	11.011	0.000**
Importance of religion in life (1 item)	1.652	1.431	0.078	1.155	0.249

Predicted variable: abortion attitudes *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.

- A significant regression equation was found, $F(6,373) = 83.570$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.603$, R^2 [adjusted] = 0.611).
- The percentage of variance in the scores accounted for by the model was 60%.
- Less religiosity, greater abortion knowledge, being a woman, and identifying as "pro-choice" significantly contributed to more positive attitudes toward abortion in this sample.
- While moderately correlated with abortion attitudes ($r = 0.436$, $p < 0.01$), the single item *How important is religion in your life?* did not contribute to the model.

CONCLUSION

- With the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, attention must be given to the possible change in medical students' attitudes toward abortion (as well as any newly developed constraints on clinical training) and to ensure the provision of comprehensive education as states will determine the limits of these practices and procedures.
- While further research in this area is needed, findings from this study can help assess students' attitudes about abortion and guide medical education efforts to better prepare tomorrow's OB/GYN physicians.