
Fewer Americans choose abortions

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 17 (Xinhua) -- The number of abortions in the United States has plunged to 1.2 million a year, down 25 percent since peaking in 1990, according to a report published Thursday.

In the early 1980s, nearly one in three pregnant women chose abortion. The most recent data show that proportion is closer to one in five, said the report published by the Los Angeles Times.

There has been a striking change in the landscape since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1990, with ever-fewer pregnant women choosing abortion and those who do increasingly opting to avoid surgical clinics, said the report.

The research was conducted by the Guttmacher Institute, a New York-based nonprofit that focuses on reproductive issues.

Women looking to end early pregnancies are gravitating to medication abortions, in which they take two pills under a doctor's supervision to induce miscarriage, according to the report.

This approach lets them avoid surgery -- and the protesters who often picket clinics -- and expel the embryo in the privacy of their homes, the report said.

The Food and Drug Administration approved the pills in 2000 for use through the seventh week of pregnancy.

By 2005, the most recent year covered by the report, the pills accounted for 13 percent of all abortions.

"That's a significant drop, and it's encouraging," said Randall K. O'Bannon, director of education and research for the antiabortion group National Right to Life.

"Abortion rate" refers to the number of abortions per 1,000 women of reproductive age.