

## ABORTION AND BIRTH CONTROL IN HONG KONG

Under the Offences Against the Person Ordinance of Hong Kong, no. 4 of 1865, attempts to procure abortion are criminal offences. The relevant sections of the Ordinance state as follows:

Section 46: Any woman, being with child, who with intent to procure her own miscarriage, unlawfully administers to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or unlawfully uses any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, and any person who, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she is or is not with child, unlawfully administers or causes to be taken by her any poison or other noxious thing, or unlawfully uses any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, shall be guilty of felony, and shall be liable to imprisonment for life.

Section 47: Any person who unlawfully supplies or procures any poison or other noxious thing or any instrument or thing whatsoever, knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used or employed with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she is or is not with child, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for three years. 1/

The Government of Hong Kong has no official policy as regards family planning. All activities in this area are carried out by the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, a voluntary organization. The Government has, however, supported the Association's activities in the form of subsidies. The Association has distributed conventional contraceptives, and in addition has now embarked on an extensive program of family planning

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Laws of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Mersons and Co., 1950, Vol V, Chapter 212, p. 97-98.

based on the use of the intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUD). In 1965, almost 30,000 IUD insertions were made, and it is estimated that the crude birth rate in Hong Kong has decreased from about 31 per thousand in 1963 to 27 per thousand in 1965.<sup>2/</sup>

The ten percent decline in Hong Kong's birth rate between 1965 and 1966 has been attributed in large part to this very IUD program of the Hong Kong Family Planning Association, which spanned the period from 1964 to April 1966.<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>2/</sup> Studies in Family Planning, New York, Population Council, No. 14 (September, 1966), p. 2.

<sup>3/</sup> Ronald Freedman and John Y. Takeshita, Family Planning in Taiwan, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1969, footnote to p. 8.

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