



THE NETWORK
TOWARDS UNITY FOR HEALTH



Facultad de Medicina



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"PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: A PATH
TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE"

SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY BASED
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TUFH 2020 Abstracts

Title	Opening the discourse of Women's Rights to Abortion in Jamaica
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Content

Abortion, the termination of a pregnancy, is deemed safe when it is performed by a trained physician in a manner which meets the minimum standards of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Jamaica Medical Students' Association Standing Committee on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights including HIV and AIDS (JAMSA-SCORA) believes that access to safe abortion is a fundamental pillar of women's reproductive rights and key to reducing maternal mortality. One such way to achieve this is by establishing less restrictive abortion laws. Jamaica and some Caribbean territories, unlike Barbados and Guyana, still hold firmly to its fully restrictive colonial laws. Additionally, being a predominantly Christian nation provides limited opportunities for discussion in the public forum. The JAMSA-SCORA has held small group discussions with students to dissect the Jamaican Law, its implication on human rights and the barriers that prevents change. Students generally shared the views of their communities; that legalizing abortions would result in an increase in the younger generation being more sexually active while given a 'get out of jail free card'. They concluded that the hesitation to accept the legalization of abortion stems from public's ignorance and fear of sexual and reproductive rights health education. JAMSA-SCORA has committed to working with all stakeholders in a socially accountable way to produce policies advocating for national and regional access to safe abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and easier access to contraceptives. This is a story of the progress of this work, where've come from and where we need to go.