

Comparison of Prenatal Testing Rates and Pregnancy Termination Among Christian Women Living in Mixed versus Non-Mixed Communities in Israel

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1. Background & Objective

- ❖ Data on prenatal testing patterns and decision-making following fetal anomaly diagnosis among Christian women in Israel are limited.
- ❖ We examined prenatal testing utilization and pregnancy termination rates among Christian women residing in mixed versus non-mixed communities in Israel, and explored the influence of social, cultural, and religious contexts on reproductive decision-making.

2. Methods

- ❖ A cross-sectional study was conducted among Christian women aged 18 and older in Israel between July 2022 and June 2023.
- ❖ Data were collected via an online questionnaire validated by five experts in the field, comprising 36 items distributed on social media using a convenience-snowball sampling method.
- ❖ Mixed communities were defined according to the Central Bureau of Statistics as cities with a Jewish population of approximately 70% or more.

3. Results

- ❖ In total, 1,345 Christian women (mean age 36.2 years) were enrolled; 690 residing in mixed and 655 in non-mixed communities.
- ❖ Among participants, 479 (53.6%) had academic education, 638 (47.4%) identified as religious, and 64.4% had undergone prenatal testing.

Table 1: Differences in demographic characteristics for pregnancy/abortion by regional groups

Region	Criterion	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mixed Center	<i>Age</i> $F = 61.02^{***}$, $w^2 = .25$	35.77	5.65
Mixed South		22.46	1.05
Mixed North		38.96	5.58
Christian Center		39.07	2.58
Christian South		34.35	5.43
Christian North		32.38	9.25
Mixed Center	<i>Number of children</i> $F = 72.36^{***}$, $w^2 = .30$	2.10	0.92
Mixed South		0.08	0.28
Mixed North		3.86	1.56
Christian Center		5.54	2.50
Christian South		4.57	2.71
Christian North		4.02	2.64
Mixed Center	<i>Number of pregnancies</i> $F = 43.67^{***}$, $w^2 = .19$	4.57	1.98
Mixed South		1.00	0.00
Mixed North		7.75	3.28
Christian Center		7.68	2.55
Christian South		5.95	3.28
Christian North		5.96	4.03
Mixed Center	<i>Number of abortions following abnormal diagnosis of child</i> $F = 92.06^{***}$, $w^2 = .42$	1.64	1.11
Mixed South		0.00	0.00
Mixed North		2.84	1.30
Christian Center		1.33	1.04
Christian South		0.55	0.98
Christian North		1.39	1.34

Note. ***p < .001. M = mean. SD = standard deviation.

4. Conclusions

- ❖ Residing in a mixed community, being secular, and having higher education were associated with greater use of diagnostic services and higher termination rates.
- ❖ Our findings highlight the need for broader access to genetic counseling and underscore the influence of Jewish-majority society on reproductive decision-making among Christian women in Israel.

3. Results

Table 2: Differences in attitudes, and beliefs regarding invasive tests and pregnancy terminations by regional groups

Region	Criterion	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mixed Center	<i>Invasive tests for diagnosing abnormality</i> $F = 36.30^{***}$, $w^2 = .15$	6.07	1.03
Mixed South		7.00	0.00
Mixed North		4.68	1.47
Christian Center		4.08	1.86
Christian South		4.94	2.00
Christian North		4.65	2.26
Mixed Center	<i>Consulting with a religious authority to consider invasive tests</i> $F = 102.14^{***}$, $w^2 = .52$	1.70	0.96
Mixed South		1.00	0.00
Mixed North		3.15	1.31
Christian Center		4.83	1.95
Christian South		3.94	1.97
Christian North		4.02	2.03
Mixed Center	<i>Belief in religious values and morals</i> $F = 84.92^{***}$, $w^2 = .34$	2.33	1.60
Mixed South		1.08	0.28
Mixed North		3.87	1.74
Christian Center		5.23	1.66
Christian South		4.53	2.10
Christian North		4.66	1.90

Note. ***p < .001. M = mean. SD = standard deviation. All criteria are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) and 7 (very much/likely, in 100%). Group sizes are as follows: (1) Mixed Center, n = 239; (2) Mixed South, n = 13; (3) Mixed North, n = 321; (4) Christian Center, n = 244; (5) Christian South, n = 110; (6) Christian North, n = 418.

Figure 1: Distribution of Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT) by regional groups

