

Pre-abortion Counselling in Flanders (Belgium)

How do **women** feel about it?

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Presentation Outline

- International debate
- Legal context and practice in Flanders
- Research methods and questions
- Results
- Conclusion

International Debate

Pre-abortion counselling...

“is **superfluous** because most women are already sure about their decision when they enter the abortion center”

“is **intrusive, paternalistic and ignores women’s needs**”

“should only be **targeted** to the women who are at risk of post-abortion psychological problems”

“should only be offered to the women who **ask for it**”

International Debate: Problems

1. Ethical versus scientific debate?
2. Meaning of “counselling”?
3. Political and legal context (priorities)?
4. Where are the women themselves?

How do **women** feel
about pre-abortion counselling
as it is organised in
Flemish abortion centers?

Legal Context (Belgium)

1. Health care institute which **encompasses**

- an abortion counselling service
- a multidisciplinary team
- which can inform and support

2. Six days waiting period



“Counselling” in Practice (LUNA Abortion Centers)

1. **Opportunity** to speak
2. **All** women
3. Psychosocial workers
4. Trained
5. Non-directive attitude



Research Methods

- **Explorative** study
- 971 women in 5 LUNA abortion centers
- Pre-counselling and post-counselling survey
- Dutch, French and English

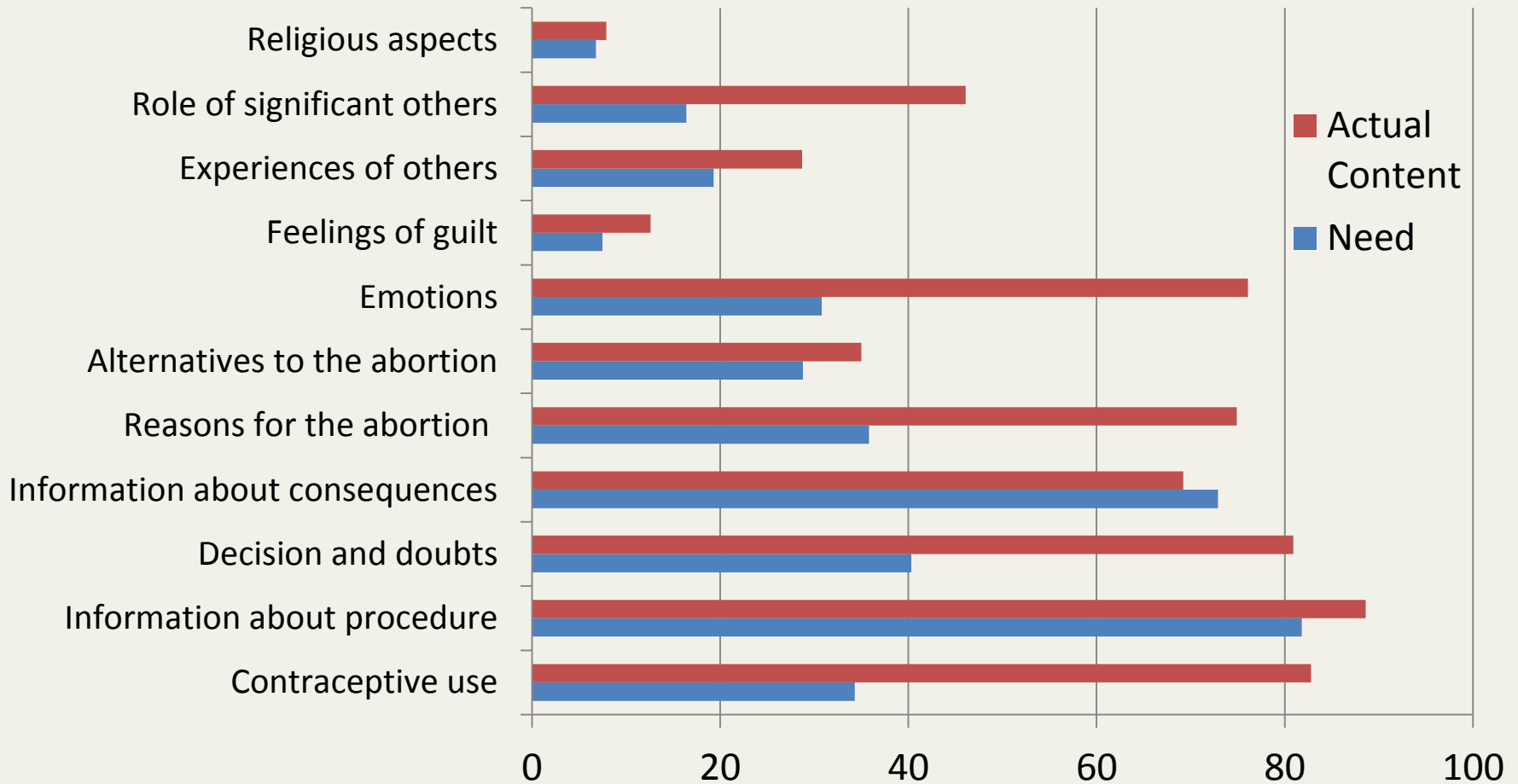
*Vandamme, J., Wyverkens, E., Buysse, A., Vrancken, C. & Brondeel, R. (2012) Pre-abortion counselling from women's point of view. **In review** (The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care).*

Research Questions

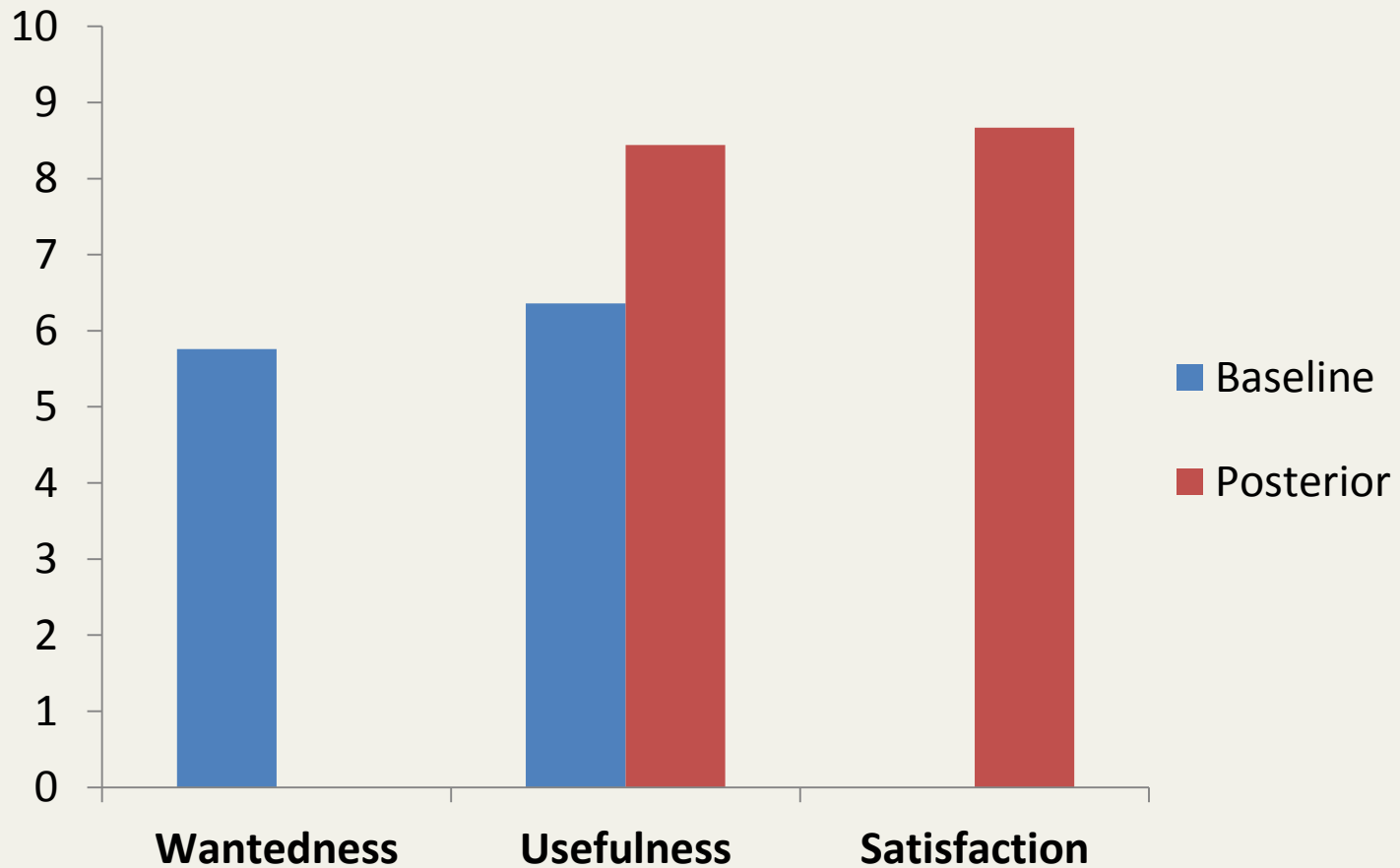
1. Does the session **fulfill their needs**?
2. How do they **perceive** the session?
 - Before
 - Afterwards
3. How do they **experience** the session?
 - Before
 - Afterwards
4. What are **helping** factors for them?

1) Does the session fulfill their needs?

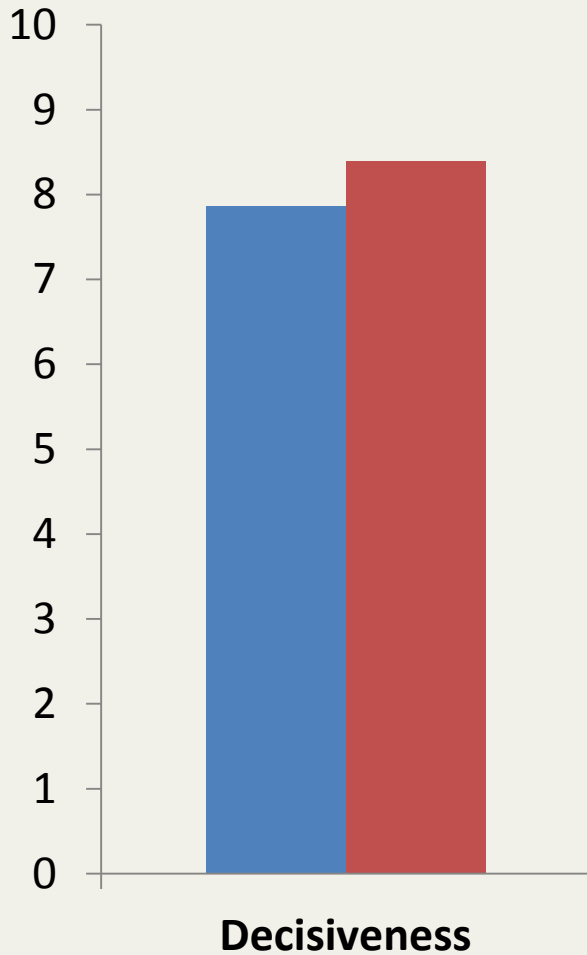
NEED TO DISCUSS VERSUS ACTUAL CONTENT



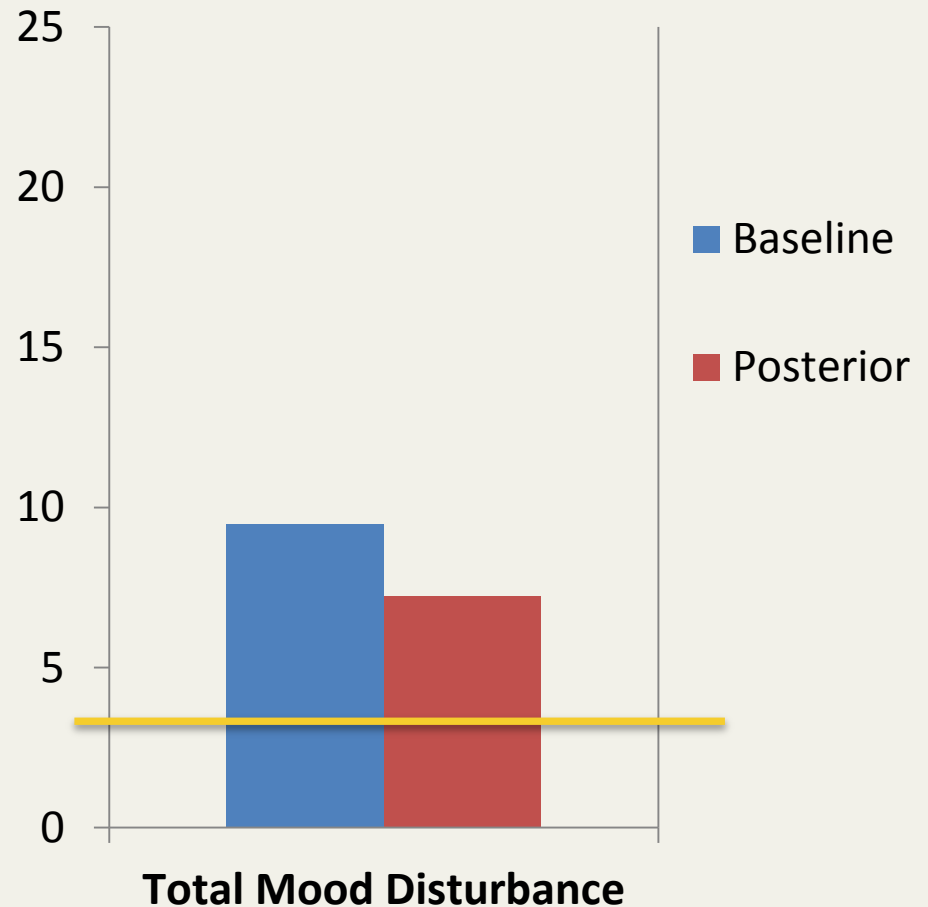
2) How do they **perceive** the session?



3) How do they experience the session?



■ Baseline
■ Posterior



■ Baseline
■ Posterior

3) How do they **experience** the session?

“pleasant”

“relaxed/calm”

**“reassuring/relieving/
encouraging”**

**“empathic/open/
warm/supportive”**

4) What are **helping** factors for them?

“You can **tell everything** that is on your mind”

“There was someone **really listening** to me”

“To **know** I can be pregnant again”

“To **know** that there are so many women who are in the same situation”

“That she **didn't doubt** my decision”

“She said I have **the right** to take this decision”

“To be convinced that this is the **right decision** for me now”

To conclude...

Pre-abortion counselling in Flanders...

1. Is about “tailoring”
2. Is experienced by women with an initial restraint
3. Is well-appreciated afterwards

To conclude...



Thank you for your attention!

Thanks to

the LUNA abortion centers

Carine Vrancken

Nausikaa Martens

Anne Verougstraete

prof. Dr. Ann Buysse

Ruben Brondeel