

Health Issues Cen



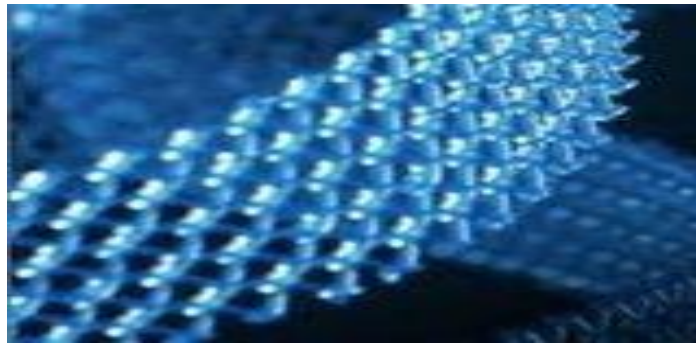
Consumer voices
for better healthcare



TVM

For the good of the many

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Health Issues Centre



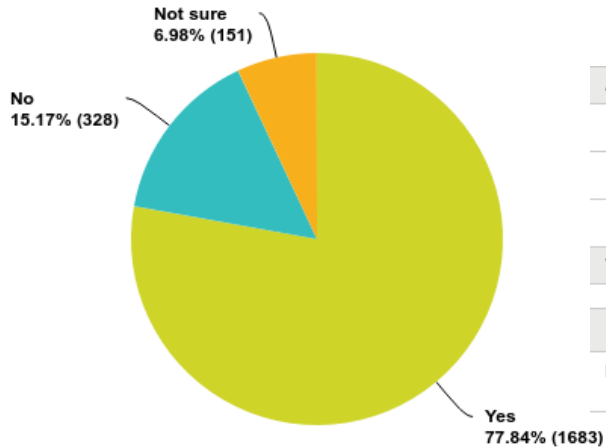
Understanding Pelvic Mesh - Implants and Impacts

Many women in Australia have undergone pelvic mesh implants. Many did not give their informed consent. Many have suffered crippling adverse side-effects.

Nobody knows how many.

We need to hold the health system accountable to these women.

Q1: Have you undergone a transvaginal mesh, tape or sling implant as treatment for urinary incontinence or pelvic organ prolapse?

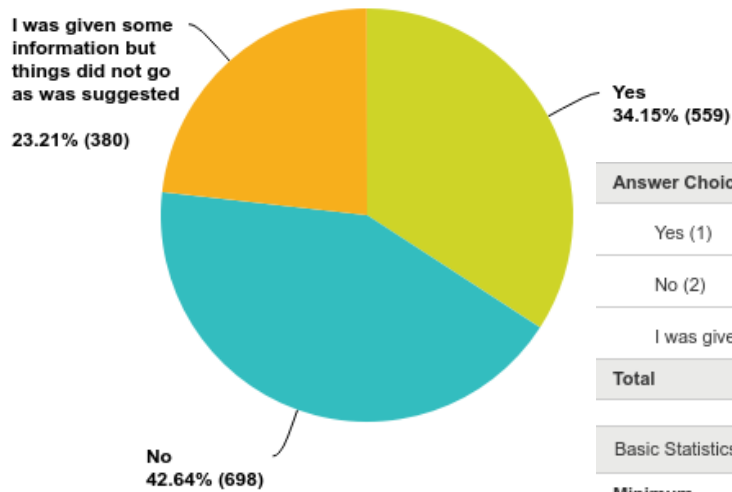


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes (1)	77.84% 1,683
No (2)	15.17% 328
Not sure (3)	6.98% 151
Total	2,162

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	3.00	1.00	1.29	0.59

Answered: 2,162 Skipped: 32

Q3: Do you feel you were fully informed before agreeing to the procedure?

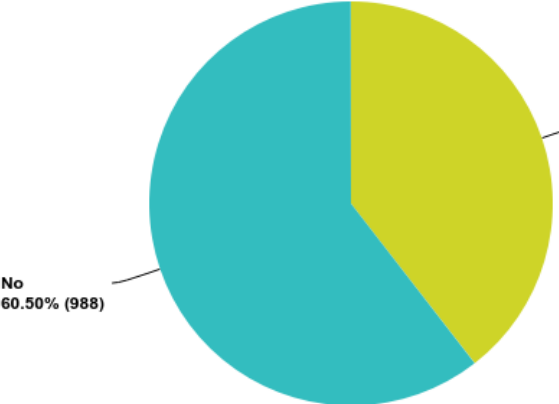


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes (1)	34.15%	559
No (2)	42.64%	698
I was given some information but things did not go as was suggested (3)	23.21%	380
Total	1,637	

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	3.00	2.00	1.89	0.75

Answered: 1,637 Skipped: 557

Q4: Did the procedure satisfactorily resolve your health concerns?

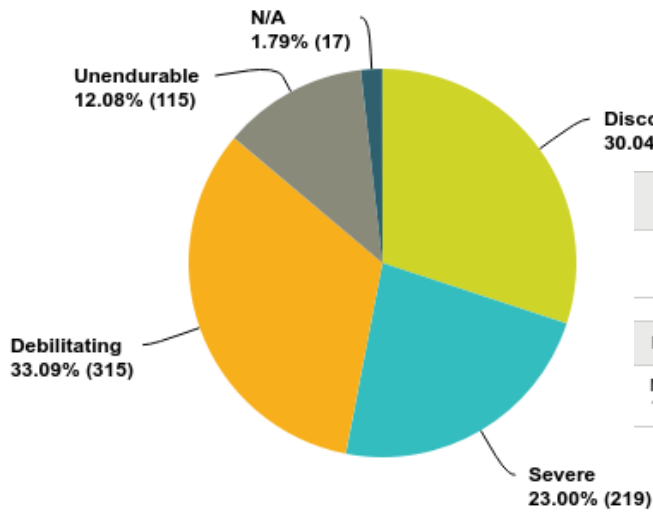


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes (1)	39.50% 645
No (2)	60.50% 988
Total	1,633

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	2.00	1.61	0.49

Answered: 1,633 Skipped: 561

Q6: How would you rate this adverse impact?

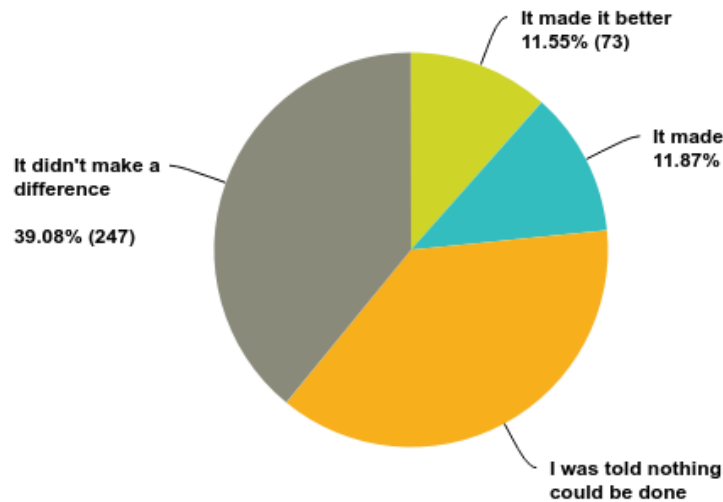


	Discomforting (1)	Severe (2)	Debilitating (3)	Unendurable (4)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	30.04% 286	23.00% 219	33.09% 315	12.08% 115	1.79% 17	952	2.28

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	4.00	2.00	2.28	1.03

Answered: 952 Skipped: 1,242

Q9: If you were offered remedial treatment, did it change your condition?



Answer Choices	Responses
It made it better (1)	11.55% 73
It made it worse (2)	11.87% 75
I was told nothing could be done (3)	37.50% 237
It didn't make a difference (4)	39.08% 247
Total	632

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	4.00	3.00	3.04	0.98

Answered: 632 Skipped: 1,562

Category	Code	Description	Number of References
Outcome of the surgery	Surgery resolved my problems	Surgery resolved their symptoms and they were happy/satisfied with the outcome. It should be noted that many women indicated that overtime their symptoms had returned. Some women in this category also indicated that they had other symptoms but were unsure if they were related to the mesh implants.	121
	Surgery resolved symptoms but caused other issues	Surgery fixed their prolapsed problem but other issues caused by the surgery were far worse than the symptoms experienced with the prolapse.	23
	Symptoms persist post surgery	The procedure had little or no impact on symptoms includes women who indicated that their symptoms were worse following the surgery.	115
Secondary surgical interventions	Needed multiple procedures to correct problems	The need for multiple surgical procedures to try and rectify problems related to the mesh implant, in many cases four or more operations. Most indicated that these surgeries had not rectified the problems.	130
	Mesh removal	Attempts to have the mesh removed with varied outcomes. Some had not been able to find a doctor who would agree to remove it; many were told it was not possible to remove the mesh. Most of those that reported having partial removal indicated that it had not resolved their symptoms. A small number of women (n=10) reported that they had gone to USA/UK to have the mesh removed; most of these indicated that symptoms had improved.	51

Impact of the surgery on quality of life	Major social and physical impact on my life	Major social and or physical impact on quality of life often described as life being ruined/destroyed. Not being able to undertake routine daily tasks, care for their children, financial hardship and emotional distress were frequently mentioned. Some women indicated that they had suicidal thoughts and were scared for the future.	160
	Affected my ability to work	No longer able to work or having to significantly reduce working hours.	34
	Depression/ Anxiety	Mental health issues usually attributed to the impact of the physical problems caused by the mesh implants.	36
	Relationship Issues	Physical complications impacting on family relationships and friendships. Feelings of guilt related to not being able to care for their family. Financial strain cause by multiple surgeries and not being able to work impacting relationships. Some indicated that their marriage/partnerships had ended as a result of the impact of complications.	110
	Sexual problems	Painful sexual intercourse often resulting in avoiding all sexual activity with their partner. Abrasions to the penis from the mesh protruding the vaginal wall. Women spoke of the added distress of having their concerns about this ignored or brushed aside when they tried to discuss them with their doctor.	88
	Pain	Pain featured in the majority of the responses it was frequently described as being constant, and debilitating. Other impacts included; unable to function normally, diminished ability to enjoy life, unable to walk or sit for any length of time due to back and leg pain. Some described the pain as unbearable.	237

	Urinary Problems	Urinary problems such as incontinence and persistent UTIs were the most frequent issues. Others indicated that the surgery had fixed their incontinence but they now had problems related to not being able to urinate or to empty their bladder fully and for some this required self catheterization.	187
	Complications due to erosion of vagina, adhesions or nerve damage	A range of issues related to the mesh eroding the vaginal wall resulting in infections, discharge and adhesions to the bowel and bladder. Issues of nerve damage in pelvic region were also commonly mentioned resulting in pain, loss of feeling and movement in the legs.	130
	Experienced Autoimmune Response	Autoimmune responses included – fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, arthritis, blood conditions and allergic reactions.	34
	Bowel Problems	Faecal incontinence as a consequence of the erosion problems and/or extreme pain with bowel actions.	34

Understanding of the implications of surgery involving mesh implants	Did not feel fully informed about mesh surgery and/or regret having the surgery	Not being fully informed about what the surgery involved and/ or not being told about the potential complications. Many of these women explicitly stated that they regretted having the surgery. A large number of the respondents commented that mesh should be banned as they did not want others to suffer as they had.	120
	Felt well informed about the surgery	Felt they had had the procedure clearly explained to them.	12
	Doctors dismissed my symptoms	Feeling distressed because symptoms could not be explained/believed. Being made to feel that their symptoms were not real and/ or unrelated to the mesh implant and in some cases being made to feel they were to blame for their problems. Difficulty obtaining information from health professionals about possible side effects of mesh.	54
	Unsure if problems are related to mesh implants	Significant symptoms following surgical procedures for prolapse but unsure if they had had mesh implants or they knew they had mesh implants but were unsure if their symptoms were due to this.	60

Catastrophic system failure

How could this happen?

ACSQHC

TGA

RANZCOG

State Quality and Safety authorities

Complaints commissioners

AHPRA

Community organisations

Thank you

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