Secret strategies: Women and abortion in Yoruba society, Nigeria

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired immune deficiency syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>Antenatal care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAN</td>
<td>Christian Health Association of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;C</td>
<td>Dila(ta)tion and curettage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Demographic and health survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVA</td>
<td>Electrical vacuum aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOMWAN</td>
<td>Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>Family planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>General Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFH</td>
<td>International Family Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAS</td>
<td>International Projects Assistance Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPPF</td>
<td>International Planned Parenthood Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCD</td>
<td>Intra-uterine contraceptive device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVF</td>
<td>In-vitro/vivo fertilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>Junior secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMH</td>
<td>Lagos Island Maternity Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSHMB</td>
<td>Lagos State Hospital Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUTH</td>
<td>Lagos University Teaching Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCH</td>
<td>Maternal and child health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMR</td>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVA</td>
<td>Manual vacuum aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>Oral contraceptive pill(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHC</td>
<td>Primary health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID</td>
<td>Pelvic inflammatory disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPA</td>
<td>Postpartum abstinence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPFN</td>
<td>Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Population Services International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFH</td>
<td>Society for Family Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Senior secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STD(I)</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted disease (infection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Traditional birth attendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>Termination of pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Vacuum aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHARC</td>
<td>Women’s Health and Action Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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</table>
**Glossary**

The Yoruba alphabet includes the letters ẹ, ọ and ọ; ẹ and ọ correspond to the opening vowel sounds in ‘bet’ and ‘not’ respectively, s is pronounced ‘sh’. Yoruba is a tonal language with three pitches: high (‘), medium (‘) and low (‘) — these pitches are not always indicated in texts; I also did not include them. Yoruba has no plural form of nouns; by numerals and/or the context of the sentence it has to be deduced whether plural or singular is meant (see also Eades 1980:xiii).

**Abiku** spirit child  
**Agan** barren woman  
**Agbẹbi** midwife  
**Agbo** herbal medicinal drink  
**Airomobi** infertility  
**Ajẹ** witch  
**Akọṣę jaye** destiny  
**Aladura** spiritual African Christian churches  
**Aran** worm  
**Aran giniṣa** giniṣa worm living in the uterus, which may cause infertility  
**Aṣẹjẹ** medicinal soup  
**Aṣiri** secrets that will cause embarrassment if revealed  
**Aṣọsi** sexually transmitted infection — gonorrhoea  
**Baba** father, address of respect for older men  
**Babalawo** Ifa priest / traditional spiritual healer / herbalist  
**Ebu** black medicinal powder  
**Eda** sperm flowing out of the vagina  
**Elewe ọmọ** herbalists, mostly women  
**Emere** wicked spirit  
**Gbẹrẹ** incision mark with medicine rubbed into it  
**Idile** patrilineage  
**Igbadi** waistband  
**Ifa** major Yoruba deity who is in direct contact with Olorun (Supreme God of Yoruba)  
**Iju** fibroid (in the uterus)  
**Iya** mother  
**Iya abiku** mother of an abiku child or children, mother whose children die young  
**Juju** magic, charm, spell  
**Kauń** potash, used in cooking and for self-abortion  
**Oba** king  
**Ogogoro** local gin  
**Ọkọ orun** spirit husband  
**Ọlọmo ọwọ** traditional healer specialised in reproductive health, literally: owner of small children  
**Oriṣa** deity  
**Oruka** ring  
**Woli** priest in Aladura Church