

Committee Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Enquiry into RU486

1. Request not to change status quo re RU486
2. General reasons
3. Psychiatric reasons
4. Request for more effort to reduce abortion rate

1. We respectfully request that the Minister for Health CONTINUES to exercise veto power over whether the abortion medication RU486 is used in Australia.

2. General reasons: Abortion is a serious social issue which should be regulated by elected and accountable representatives.

Most Australians believe that too many abortions are performed in Australia.

Pre-Abortion counseling is often provided by representatives of abortion providers who minimize the research evidence about long-term physical and psychological effects on women, and relationship effects with their partners and subsequent live children. As mainstream Australian society has yet to acknowledge and address this research, the consequences of providing an additional abortion method which is marketed as making abortion easier may increase further the rate of abortions and subsequent individual and societal damage.

RU486 is never safe for the unborn child and is not as safe as surgical abortion for the mother. New England Journal of Medicine reported the risks of additional intervention, failure to attend follow-up, and fatalities.

3. Psychiatric reasons: The fact that the vast majority of Australian abortions are performed for social reasons implies that many women would bear and raise their child, if they had financial and relationship support instead of perceiving that the child threatens the survival of their individuality, their relationship, their career or the wellbeing of their other children. Women frequently decide to keep their children if they believe that they will have the support they need to do so. A medical abortion, marketed as an easy option, would have the effect of making it harder for women to ask for help when they are in crisis about their pregnancy. It is a natural reaction when in a crisis for people to seek a perceived quick and easy option. It takes time and dialogue to work out what will be best for all parties for the long term.

As a Consultant Psychiatrist, one of us (Dianne Grocott) has first-hand experience of the psychological consequences to women, men, grandparents and siblings of abortion decisions. Many researchers have documented increased rates of depression, suicidal behaviour, substance abuse and relationship dysfunction that have variously been labeled “post-abortion stress syndrome (PASS)” or “post-abortion syndrome (PAS)”. The reality of PAS is attested to by people biased against abortion (see www.AfterAbortion.org), even those biased towards abortion (see www.Afterabortion.com) and by people who have provided abortion (see Meet the Abortion Providers, www.prolifeaction.org). There is a great need for public recognition of the psychological consequences of abortion so individuals can be correctly diagnosed and treated. There is also need for research in this area.

RU486 is marketed as “easier” than surgical abortion. The initiation of a medical abortion is easier, but the consequences of delivering a dead foetus at home, or of pain and bleeding for up to weeks would further increase psychological trauma to women and their families. There is a need for independent research into the true psychological consequences of RU486, especially the consequences for women who decline to attend for follow-up. Research into Post Abortion Syndrome has shown that symptomatic individuals may attempt to protect themselves from further trauma by avoiding follow-up with or research by abortion providers.

4. Australian women, men and children deserve more choices other than abortion. Effort should be invested in education, couple counseling and support of pregnant women. When families or communities in which an unplanned pregnancy occurs can support the mother so that she can support her child, they allow that child an opportunity to be born and raised to attain his or her potential and contribute to the wellbeing of Australian society, rather than instead becoming yet another abortion statistic.

Yours Sincerely

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