

Dear Senators, Re :- RU486

The National Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist (NASOG) wish to inform you that they believe that the bill entitled " Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486) Bill 2005" should be enacted.

RU486 has many applications apart from termination of viable pregnancies which is an issue on its' own and which should be debated at a different time and probably in a different forum.

RU 486 is a useful medication in treating women who, unfortunately have an early non-viable pregnancy and who would be offered a surgical procedure as things are at this time. Many women in this situation may, if possible, elect to have the pregnancy terminated in the privacy of their own home , rather than having to undergo a surgical procedure, in a hospital, with the possible innuendo that they are terminating a viable pregnancy.

RU 486 has also been shown to be a very effective "morning after the night before " pill and so has a place to play in preventing unwanted pregnancies. The mechanism of it's effect is complicated and so it cannot be viewed, in this setting, as an abortifacient.

RU 486 also has a place in inducing labour in those women who unfortunately have a foetal death in utero.

RU486 has never been referred to the Therapeutic Goods Authority (TGA) ,the appropriate authority to determine whether or not a drug should be made available to the people of Australia for whatever reason, for assessment as to the safety of the drug. If the TGA approve the drug, it is referred to the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee (ADEC) to assess it's value to society.

RU486 has been denied the chance to be approved as a useful drug in the management of problems related to contraception and the management of termination of non viable pregnancies and also those pregnancies that are complicated by lethal abnormalities.

The debate is being complicated by the anti-abortion issue which is a different argument.

No other drug is subjected to the same procedure as RU486, and there are a lot more lethal drugs available than this one.

The issue here is whether the Minister should, for what ever reason, be able to prevent the women of Australia from having access to a drug that is available to their international counterparts, without it having been before the TGA.

Those who are against it's use for termination of viable pregnancies, should not oppose it for other indications. The abortion debate is bigger than the availability of a safe drug that can be used for contraception and terminating non-viable pregnancies. Medical practitioners can be licensed for it's use and this licensing can be linked to Continuing Professional Development.

NASOG supports the bill to repeal the Ministerial responsibility for approval of RU486.

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