



Media Release: Marie Stopes and RU486

While one of the world's largest providers of abortion services adds to its ability to generate more income through the availability of training of doctors and the supply of drugs to procure abortions, Australian women are once again supposed to be thankful for an additional solution to their primarily psychosocial problems.

Whilst the research undertaken by Marie Stopes own medical director found that the '...regimen is an effective option for Australian women', with minimal adverse effects, international and national researchers not connected to the organisation do not agree.

A Finnish study published in 2009 found that medical abortion had around 4 times the rate of adverse events than surgical abortion, with haemorrhage experienced by almost 16% of women taking RU486. A more recent Australian study found that 1 in 18 users of RU486 required admission to hospital for adverse events compared to only 1 in 250 women undergoing surgical abortion.

RU486 is sold as a solution to women living in rural and regional areas where access to surgical abortion may be more difficult. Yet it is clear that for these women, the use of RU486 becomes even more dangerous where their access to appropriate medical and surgical care in the face of adverse events may also be restricted.

International research already informs us that up to 30% of women suffer serious and prolonged mental health problems following surgical abortion. The potential for significantly increased psychological harm for women more actively participating in a lengthy, often painful process of abortion, in their own homes, and often confronted with the sight of their expelled babies is enormous.

Yet Marie Stopes, abortion advocates, and the media 'sell' this as a victory for women's health. Social structures that do not support women to continue their pregnancies, but force them to choose between careers and children, education and children, partners and family and children are not 'health' issues.

Establishing flexible programs of study for pregnant and parenting university students is a solution. Prosecuting men who are violent toward their partners and coerce them into having abortions is a solution. Appropriate housing, warm clothes and adequate food for a homeless, pregnant woman is a solution.

These solutions cost money, take time, involve more resources and say to women you do not have to choose. They are better for women. RU486 is better for Marie Stopes.

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