

Statement on “Abortion reversal”

Te Kāreti O Nga Kaiwhakawhanau Ki Aotearoa | New Zealand College of Midwives (the College) is the professional organisation for midwifery in Aotearoa New Zealand. The College agrees with, and endorses statements made by the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora¹ and other health professional organisations on the issue of what is termed “abortion reversal”.^{2 3 4} “Abortion reversal” refers to a non-evidence-based procedure whereby a pregnant woman/person who has taken mifepristone medication to induce an abortion then attempts to reverse her decision by taking progesterone. The claims of success made about abortion reversal are not reputable.

The College considers that women/people seeking early abortions should be fully informed and able to make an informed decision before commencing any abortion process. This includes clear communication and understanding about the associated benefits and risks with early medical abortion using mifepristone / misoprostol prior to commencing this medication.

The College does not support the promotion of “abortion reversal” using progesterone as there is no clinical evidence of effectiveness. If a pregnant woman/person becomes distressed after taking mifepristone to induce abortion, there is a need for compassionate counselling and support. Because of its abortifacient effect, data relating to ongoing pregnancy following mifepristone exposure is too limited to determine human teratogenicity, and Medsafe recommends ultrasound monitoring with special attention to limbs if pregnancy is to continue, given an association with limb malformations in some animal studies⁵.

Statement by the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora

1. Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora (2024). Position statement from the Ministry of Health on ‘abortion reversal’. <https://www.health.govt.nz/regulation-legislation/abortion/regulating-abortion-services/position-statement-on-abortion-reversal>

Statements by other health professional organisations

2. The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP). (2024). Advice on 'abortion reversal'. <https://www.rnzcgp.org.nz/resources/our-voice/advice-to-members-on-abortion-reversal/>
3. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RANZCOG). (2024) No reputable evidence for 'abortion reversal' says RANZCOG. <https://ranzcof.edu.au/news/abortion-reversal-statement/>
4. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH), Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the British Society of Abortion Care Providers (BSACP). (2022). Joint statement on 'Abortion reversal'. <https://www.rcog.org.uk/media/nbahkgvo/rcog-fsrh-abortion-reversal-position-statement.pdf>

Reference

5. Medsafe (2022). Mifegyne 200 mg tablets datasheet. <https://medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/m/Mifegynetab.pdf>

Statement approved by the New Zealand College of Midwives | Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa National Board, July 2024