
To the senate committee,

Please accept my submission to the enquiry into the Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013.

I believe that this Bill should be strongly endorsed by the committee. Australia is a near neighbour to Asia and attracts many Asian immigrants; but it has long been known that elements of Asian culture strongly favour male children over females. It has also long been known that this has resulted in the killing (whether before or after birth) of many millions of girl babies particularly over the past few decades in Asia.

The United Nations Population Fund has produced a summary report on the plight of Asian girls entitled: Sex-ratio imbalance in Asia: Trends, consequences and policy responses (http://www.unfpa.org/gender/docs/studies/summaries/regional_analysis.pdf). Speaking of the recent sharp increase in the sex ratio at birth (SRB) in these countries, the report says "The origin of this rise in SRB is linked to the introduction of sex-selective abortions in many Asian countries. While there are other methods with which to alter the sex ratio of a newborn, the abortion of female foetuses is by far the most common practice accounting for today's skewed SRB values. This development, after all, specifically followed the arrival of ultrasound and amniocentesis technologies in the late 1970s, which made it possible for the first time for parents to know in advance the sex of their child – and, potentially, to eliminate female foetuses."

There is no doubt that abortion is widely used in many parts of Asia to selectively eliminate girl babies. I hope the committee agrees that we do not want this practice imported to Australia. I hope also that the committee will follow the advice of the report when it goes on to say "The regulation of sex-selective abortions is obviously a strategy bound to yield results, if implemented vigorously."

Yours sincerely,

Pastor Barrie Ryan