The
Fertility Society
of Australia

PROMOTING AND IMPROVING HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Amendment (Assisted Reproductive Treatment Statistics) Bill 2019

Hearing. Melbourne Thursday 21st November 2019

Preliminary Submission from The Fertility Society of Australia (FSA) on behalf of the IVF Directors Group and Australian IVF Units

Submission in lieu of an Opening Statement to the Committee

1. The Fertility Society of Australia (FSA) is the key academic body representing all professionals and patients involved in the care of patients with fertility problems in Australia and New Zealand.

2. The IVF Directors Group is a sub-committee of the FSA with a remit to make representations on legislative and regulatory matters that affect the practice of reproductive medicine.

3. From the very beginning, the FSA has involved consumers in their strategic planning. The consumer group, ACCESS, will again provide vital feedback through its representative on the joint working group, established to develop solutions for improved patient access to IVF outcome data.

4. The FSA set up the world's first national database (ANZARD) of IVF treatment results in 1983. This is the oldest IVF Data registry in the world. Australia historically and currently is regarded as a world leader in the analysis and publication of data related to IVF treatment outcomes.

5. ANZARD was conceived as a resource for epidemiological research and as an audit and regulatory tool for the Reproductive Technology Accreditation Committee (RTAC).

6. Since its inception, ANZARD has continuously evolved to reflect both the profound changes in fertility treatment and technology as well as the growing requirements of IVF data collections. The most recent iteration, ANZARD 3.0, due in 2020 will see the collection of more sophisticated diagnostic and prognostic data about the patients going through fertility treatment.

7. The collection and analysis of IVF data is extraordinarily complex. From the beginning, the database has been developed in partnership with the National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit (NPESU, UNSW). This independent group has long been one of the world's leaders in fertility data analysis. The Director of the Unit, Associate Professor Chambers, has a strong international reputation in this field and is a member of the International Committee for Monitoring ART.

8. The FSA accept there is a need for accurate and consumer-friendly information about IVF outcomes so patients can make informed choices regarding their care.

9. The Fertility Society of Australia is committed to work efficiently and effectively with Government to deliver publicly available data about clinic success rates which are clear and easily interpreted by patients.

10. Before choosing a clinic, an even more important step for patients is assessing what prognosis they can expect from IVF treatment. To meet this need, the FSA is committed to make available an online pregnancy predictor tool. This tool would be used in parallel with the proposed information site under this Bill to provide snapshots of clinic success rates as well as personalised IVF outcome predictions based on patient-specific prognostic characteristics.

11. The FSA is strongly opposed to transferring the administration, analysis and publication of their data to the AIHW and support the continued involvement and leadership of the NPESU.

Professor Luk Rombauts
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