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Subject:Contraceptives

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To:emlsecretariat@who.int

The Secretary
Expert Committee
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Regarding the report entitled "Systematic review of contraceptive medicines - Does choice make a difference?" as well as the proposal for two contraceptive methods to be added to the List (a two-rod levonorgestrel-releasing implant and a combined injectable contraceptive), it is imperative that a differentiation be made between the provision of family planning services and curative medicine. Should the well accepted criteria for the latter be applied to family planning services, it is most likely that there would be a risk to the principle of choice by individuals and couples regarding the best method to suit their needs. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994 stressed the need to ensure informed choices for individuals and make available a full range of safe and effective methods. It is well recognised that the same approach cannot be used for both therapeutic medical care and contraceptive services with its centrality on range of methods to ensure a high contraceptive prevalence rate.

The comments from WHO/RHR dated 10 January 2007, are fully supported regarding both the systematic review and the need to approve the above two methods of family planning as it is imperative that as wide a range of safe and effective methods be accessible.

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