

Research on Reproductive Health Care - 1990

Background

Research on contraception and birth control methods has been at a standstill in the United States for many years. Both the pharmaceutical industry and the United States government have capitulated to economic and political pressures and have failed to undertake such research into both new techniques and new drugs.

Despite, or because of, the potential for making early abortions non-surgical, safer, easier and more private, anti-abortion groups have successfully blocked the research, testing and marketing of any anti-progesterone drug, including RU486, in the United States. In effect, women are being denied the potential medical benefits of an increase in reproductive choices and an improvement in reproductive health care.

RU486, also known as mifepristone, or mifegyne, is a relatively new drug which inhibits production of progesterone, a hormone needed to maintain a pregnancy. Administered under tightly controlled conditions and close medical supervision outside the United States, it has been pronounced effective as a contraceptive. Research also indicates a potential use for other medical purposes.

Therefore, NFTS resolves to:

1. Support the development in the United States and Canada of an ongoing research program on birth control and contraceptive methods including new techniques, new drugs, and new uses for existing drugs, such research to be underwritten both by the United States and Canadian governments and private pharmaceutical companies.
2. Urge the medical and scientific community of the United States, including the National Institutes of Health and the pharmaceutical industry, to undertake, a rigorous program of research and testing of potential applications of both RU486 and other similar anti-progesterone drugs to determine if these drugs meet the Food and Drug Administration criteria for safety and effectiveness and, if they do so, to ensure that they be made available to all women who might choose to take advantage of them as an additional option for reproductive health care.