Reviewer's report

Title: Realising the right to sexual and reproductive health: Access to essential medicines for medical abortion as a core obligation

Version: 0 Date: 06 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Mala Ramanathan

Reviewer's report:

The authors have ignored the political economy that obtained in 2006 in terms of United States public policy. This was the period of the Bush Presidency when the Global Gag Rule (otherwise known as the Mexico City Policy) which restricted access to funds for abortions from the United States' Govt. The same regulations find applicability currently. For this reason, this public policy context to the WHO's Model list of essential medicines and the caveat attached to inclusion of mifepristone and misoprostol gains relevance. The authors may consider this possibility as one of the contexts to the development of the model list and the caveats attached.

The authors have also taken recourse to the list and identify the lack of inclusion of mifepristone and misoprostol as violation of sexual and reproductive rights of men and women. However, this also misses out on other important global conventions such as CEDAW this violates. Perhaps the authors can be encouraged to consider other international conventions, of which Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which state parties may be signatories.

Page 3. Line 67-Page 4. Line 74. The structure of this paragraph needs rewording for clarity. "Such a conditionality risks offering a loophole to governments weary of embracing medical abortion.". They authors probably mean "Such a conditionality risks offering a loophole to governments wary of embracing medical abortion."


While raising the flag on the restrictive domestic law, the researchers can point out other culturally difficult (national) and international conventions that are endorsed by nation states. CEDAW is one such which did not have such restrictive language taking recourse to local laws and predates the WHO Model list of essential medicines. This statement violates Article 12 of CEDAW.
Article 12.

1. State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions 1 of tries article, state parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.


By adding this caveat, this WHO Model list also tends to disregard Article 23 (b) of CEDAW. Considering this two sections as part of the argument, it will strengthen it.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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