
Media release

REPRODUCTIVE SPECIALISTS EXPAND DEFINITION OF INFERTILITY BEYOND DISEASE

Historic vote endorses equal access to fertility services

An alliance of Australia's peak fertility associations has officially endorsed an expanded definition of infertility, paving the way for equal access to reproductive care regardless of relationship status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Under Medicare, funding for IVF and other reproductive services is currently limited to people with "medical infertility", currently defined as an inability to fall pregnant after several months of unprotected sex.

But the alliance, made up of ANZSREI (Australian and New Zealand Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility), FSANZ (Fertility Society of Australia and New Zealand) and RANZCOG (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists), declared this an "outdated" definition.

The historic consensus decision was taken on Saturday at the 2024 ANZSREI National Conference in Sydney.

"The right to have children and raise them in a loving home is surely one of the most fundamental human rights," ANZSREI president Prof Louise Hull said.

"Thanks to remarkable advances in science and modern medicine in recent decades, we are now able to overcome many of the challenges that previously prevented many people from becoming parents.

"Nothing in the Medicare definition should be used to deny or delay fertility treatment to any individual, regardless of relationship status or sexual orientation."

The consensus definition expands "infertility" to include "the inability to achieve a successful pregnancy based on a patient's medical, sexual, and reproductive history, age, physical findings, diagnostic testing, or any combination of these factors", thus requiring "medical intervention/s... to achieve a successful pregnancy either as an individual or with a partner."

RANZCOG president Dr Gillian Gibson said: "Our health systems are rooted in outdated societal models and must evolve to meet the needs of today's diverse communities. The revised

definition will make a big difference in improving access to essential care and reproductive services, especially for aspiring LGBTQIA+ parents."

FSANZ president Dr Petra Wale added: "This *move* not only aligns with the fundamental human right to parenthood but also paves the way for significant cost reductions and improved accessibility through national uniform legislation. By embracing this inclusive approach, we can eliminate outdated barriers and provide compassionate, effective reproductive care for all."

The group has written to Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler advising him of the expanded definition and calling for the federal government to apply it to Medicare funding for Assisted Reproductive Services in Australia.

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