



Petition PE1443 - miscarriage

RESPONSE FROM RCGP SCOTLAND

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the academic organisation in the UK for general practitioners. Its aim is to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the 'voice' of general practitioners on education, training and issues around standards of care for patients.

The College in Scotland came into existence in 1953 (one year after the UK College), when a Scottish Council was created to take forward the College's interests within the Scottish Health Service. We currently represent over 4800 GP members and Associates in Training throughout Scotland. In addition to a base in Edinburgh, the College in Scotland is represented through five regional faculty offices in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee and Glasgow.

Comments on Written Questions of 25 June 2013

The petitioner is encouraged by your comments that GPs should be prepared to offer counselling and provide information about support groups, but she states that 'according to their client group this recommendation is seldom practiced.' What is your response to the point made by the petitioner and what more can be done to ensure that the support offered to women suffering from the emotional effects of miscarriage is provided in a meaningful and consistent way?

In response to your question (above), The RCGP sets out what it expects from its members in the GP training curriculum provided for GP trainees in the UK. This includes a section relating to women's health. The College clearly states the areas GPs should cover with patients in relation to the problems they present. This includes taking a comprehensive and holistic approach to dealing with patients' health concerns; the emphasis being on patient centred care. GPs in training are expected to learn how to apply this approach in all of their consultations and are required to show competency in these skills as a prerequisite to full registration as a GP.

Once practising as a GP each of our members are required to maintain their knowledge and skills over a wide area of expertise and use the appraisal and revalidation system to help them continue to be effective in their work. The College supports them in this by providing continuous professional development opportunities such as courses and e-learning modules. Currently, we provide an e-

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learning module on our website covering early pregnancy loss which is free for our members to access. In this way we encourage GPs to remain up to date with best practice, which in this case would be the management of patients experiencing miscarriage. We would also expect this to include appropriate advice on any relevant local support groups or services, if this was available, that might be useful to patients.

From time to time the College receives valuable information from a variety of sources informing them of important issues in relation to patient care which can prompt us to ensure that our members are made aware of any concerns patients have in relation to how they are treated. You have raised the important issue of ensuring our members provide optimum help to patients having suffered early pregnancy loss. To this end, we have highlighted these concerns to our members through our regular newsletter to remind them of best practice in this clinical area.

Therefore, through comprehensive training, continuous professional development and regular reminders of best practice we hope to ensure that GPs, both in training and in practice, consider offering a quality service which will meet the needs of their patients.

Yours sincerely

Dr John Duncan
Deputy Chair (Policy)
July 2013