

What's in a Name??

Medical vs. Medication Abortion

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Why discuss Terminology??

- Is there a need for a name change?
- Need to discuss the issue as a growing number of researchers and advocates, mostly in the United States are unilaterally using new terms
- Need to stop confusing the people
- But can we come to consensus?

Arguments for Name Change

- The term medical abortion is confusing
- Term 'medical' is associated with medical necessity and with physician-based practices
- To those outside the field all abortions are 'medical'
- Health care professionals, policy makers and the public have found the terminology confusing

Arguments for Name Change

- 'Medical Abortion' does not translate well into other languages
- Women will invent their own terms if ours is confusing
- Alternative phrases used include 'abortion pills', or 'RU-something'

Arguments for Name Change

- 'Medical Abortion' does not translate well into other languages
- 'Medication abortion' most accurately represents the use of safe and effective drug-based methods to terminate unwanted pregnancy
- 'medication' translated in the Oxford English dictionary as 'the action of treating with a medically; treatment with a medicinal substance'

Arguments against Name Change

- There is already good consensus on the 'English' terminology
- The issue has come up in a few international meetings over the years and it was decided it was not a good idea to make a linguistic change
- The terminology 'medication' is confusing

Arguments against Name Change

- Different English dictionaries give slightly different interpretations of 'medical' and 'medication'
- The exercise has now become 'academic' and 'a battle of wits'
- The term 'medical' is difficult to translate – into which languages?
- Is the term 'medication' any easier?

Arguments against Name Change

- Which group of women, health care providers or even policy makers are we considering when we say the terminology is confusing?
- Are we considering only those who know the intricacies of the English language?
- Many languages do not follow literal English translation, at least not in the developing world

Arguments against Name Change

- For those whom English is not a first language and even for the common English woman the subtleties of the argument are lost
- Remember these are the people who are mostly affected by unsafe abortion

Can there be a Conclusion?

- We are trying to save women's lives
- We want to give women more choice
- Will this continued debate and confusion help women or health care providers?