

Petitioner submission of 1 May 2023

PE1991/K: Develop an educational resource on abortion

I would like to respond to some points raised by [SPUC](#) regarding my petition to create an abortion education resource.

I wish it to be noted that it is not me personally who is claiming SPUC spread disinformation but experts including the national sexual health charity, Brook, who have described SPUC learning materials as “shocking” and “problematic in many ways”¹. The materials referred to have now been pulled from BBC Bitesize. An undercover investigation by Humanists UK also found what they deemed ‘falsehoods’ being spread in schools². For example, the claim made that “*Abortion increases a woman’s chances of developing breast cancer*”, a claim which is refuted by Cancer Research UK³.

SPUC’s response states “Ms Clarke (sic) equates treatment for ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage to abortion. This is both offensive to women who have suffered the loss of a baby, and dangerous scaremongering – no pro-life person considers such treatments to be an abortion, and they are carried out in countries where abortion is illegal”. However, the NHS website states that medication or surgical procedures (the same procedures used for elective abortions) can be carried out to treat an incomplete miscarriage⁴. The same information is provided on the British Pregnancy Advisory Website which describes surgical and medication treatment options for miscarriage⁵. Abortion is a medical term and there is no separate procedure used when the abortion is elective.

Furthermore, Harvard University Medical School (HMS) state that “Abortion is the removal of pregnancy tissue, products of conception or the foetus and placenta (afterbirth) from the uterus”⁶. Please also note that the fallopian tube where an ectopic pregnancy often (though not always) forms, is part of the uterus. I cannot find any studies that

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/jul/09/bbc-bitesize-gave-platform-to-extreme-anti-abortion-group>

² <https://humanists.uk/2012/03/23/news-1009/>

³ <https://news.cancerresearchuk.org/2004/03/26/pregnancies-that-end-in-miscarriage-or-abortion-do-not-increase-a-womans-risk-of-developing-breast/>

⁴ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/what-happens/#:~:text=If%20there's%20no%20pregnancy%20tissue,pass%20out%20of%20your%20womb>

⁵ <https://www.bpas.org/more-services-information/miscarriage-care/>

⁶ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/medical-tests-and-procedures/abortion-termination-of-pregnancy-a-to-z>

suggest that all people who have suffered miscarriages find medical terminology offensive.

It is not true that all countries allow abortions for pregnancy complications such as incomplete miscarriage, there are many cases of women and people in America now being denied medical treatment until their health has deteriorated sufficiently to be considered an 'immediate threat' to life, leaving them to endure unnecessary pain and trauma⁷. A high-profile case in Malta led to a woman being airlifted to Palma because she was denied treatment for her miscarriage⁸.

I also wish to note that the petition was not, at first, collecting signatures but has now received several hundred (and rising) showing that there is indeed public support for young people to receive facts-focussed and medically accurate education on abortion.

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/health/abortion-miscarriage-treatment.html>

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jun/22/us-woman-left-traumatised-after-malta-hospital-refuses-life-saving-abortion>