



Scottish Pelvic Floor Network

Dr. Mohamed Abdel-fattah, FRCOG

Senior Lecturer/ Consultant Gynaecologist
Sub-specialist in Urogynaecology & Pelvic Floor Reconstruction

Chairman - Scottish Pelvic Floor Network (SPFN)"

Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Division of Applied Health Sciences
School of Medicine & Dentistry
Aberdeen Maternity Hospital
Cornhill Road
Aberdeen AB25 2ZD
Scotland, United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 01224 438424
Email: m.abdelfattah@abdn.ac.uk

Mr A Neil
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

23 June 2014

Dear Mr Neil

The Scottish Pelvic Floor Network (SPFN) held its 6th Annual Meeting on the 20th June 2014 and was attended by 118 clinicians and surgeons from all regions and corners of Scotland. In a special dedicated session, your announcement from Tuesday 17th June 2014 and your subsequent letter to all health boards in Scotland dated 20th June 2014, to suspend trans-vaginal mesh (TVM) procedures for treatment of pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence in women, was discussed. The SPFN members asked the steering committee to formulate their discussion, in a response to you, as below:

- The group agreed unanimously that it is scientifically inappropriate to make such a blanket decision, which fails to distinguish between synthetic mid-urethral slings (SMUS) for stress urinary incontinence and TVM for prolapse repair. This decision also fails to acknowledge the countless numbers of patients who have benefited considerably from these interventions over the last 15-20 years, especially from SMUS. SMUS are endorsed by all scientific bodies as the surgical treatment of choice for stress urinary incontinence in women. Enclosed is the SPFN position statement on the use of SMUS, which was also unanimously agreed at the annual SPFN Meeting. The SPFN urges you to re-consider the decision of suspending SMUS, as it denies women in Scotland with this condition an evidence based, minimal invasive surgical treatment option for curing their condition. In addition, this will have ramifications for surgeons and patients reverting to other surgical alternatives, which in themselves have risks and complications. The service and financial implications for the tertiary referral centres, which will be overwhelmed with referral to undertake the alternative major surgical procedures, will be significant.



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- The SPFN believe that your decision to suspend TVM excludes the procedures that involve abdominally-inserted mesh such as abdominal sacrocolpopexy. The latter is considered by all scientific bodies to be the gold-standard procedure for treatment of vaginal vault prolapse. The SPFN therefore urges you to issue a clarification, which specifies the exact procedures affected by your current decision.
- The SPFN welcomes your decision to exempt nationally-approved clinical trials from the TVM/ SMUS suspension.
- The SPFN steering committee, joined by the president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), the chairman of the British Society of Urogynaecology (BSUG) and the Scottish Committee of the RCOG (SCRCOG) welcome the opportunity to discuss the decision of suspension of SMUS with yourself and the CMO at your earliest convenience.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards

Dr. M. Abdel-fattah & Dr. Ian Ramsay
On behalf of the SPFN Steering Committee

Dr Philip Owen,
Chairman Scottish Committee, RCOG



**Royal College of
Obstetricians &
Gynaecologists**

Enclosures:

- SPFN position statement
- Letter from President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Letter from chairman of British Association of Urological Surgeons – Female Section