

Number of abortion pills seized by Irish customs declines

Officers confiscated 536 tablets in 2016 compared with 1,107 in 2014

about 18 hours ago | Updated: about 17 hours ago

Jack Power

••• The number of abortion pills seized by Irish customs officials has fallen significantly, new figures show.

It is believed, however, that a significant number of women seeking the drugs are now ordering online and collecting them from Northern Irish addresses.

Nearly 550 pills were seized last year, according to figures from the Health Products Regulatory Authority, down from 850 in 2015 and 1,107 pills in 2014.

The pills, misoprostol and mifepristone, are taken by women to induce an early term abortion. The 536 tablets seized last year were from 44 attempted importations.

A spokesperson from the HPRRA said they would “continually recommend that patients do not seek to purchase prescription medicines that have not been prescribed by a medical doctor”.

Irish women seeking to purchase unprescribed abortion tablets should be aware “there can be no guarantee as to their safety, quality or efficacy” the state’s health product regulator have stated. “There is no way of knowing how safe these medicines are or if they will work properly”.

Rebecca Gomperts, founder of Women on Web, a site where Irish women can order abortion pills online stated she does not think the drop in the number of pills confiscated represents a drop in women accessing abortion medication.

“Women will find other addresses outside Ireland to receive the medical abortion pills,” Ms Gomperts said.

Her website advises Irish women seeking medication to terminate an early stage pregnancy to order the pills to a Northern Irish address, or post office, and then travel up to collect them.

“It is widely known that making abortion illegal does not stop women from having abortions. Women will travel to other countries or find other ways to end their pregnancies,” Ms Gomperts said.

“There are no safety concerns with women taking abortion pills without medical supervision as long as the woman has a pregnancy of less than 10 weeks and is within 2 hours of a health facility. She can safely do the medical abortion at home by herself.”

ADVERTISEMENT

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Solidarity TD Ruth Coppinger said despite the drop in the number of abortion pills confiscated at Irish customs, “there is a definite increase in the numbers of women seeking abortions using medical pills”.

“Women on Web research shows three women from Ireland use their services every day. So you can see the increase in women seeking this less costly, and safe option” deputy Coppinger stated.

Between 2012 and the end of last year 3,328 abortion tablets were confiscated at Irish customs. More than 3,000 of these pills were the most commonly used abortion tablets, misoprostol.



But since 2014 there has been a rise in mifepristone pills confiscated. It is advised by abortion advocacy groups like Women on Web that mifepristone should be taken in conjunction with the more commonly known misoprostol tablet.

Accordingly, the amount of mifepristone tablets intercepted at Irish borders has increased from just 14 in 2013, to 45 in 2014, 111 in 2015, and 100 tablets last year.

The HPRa, alongside Irish customs and gardaí monitor the supply and attempted importing to illicit prescription medicines into Ireland.

“To safeguard human health, the HPRa uses a range of enforcement powers to tackle this activity, including seizing product and taking prosecutions,” a HPRa spokesperson said.

READ MORE

- ⦿ 'Any attempt' to change maternity hospital deal will scupper it
- » Whiplash is a 'myth', says leading Irish neurosurgeon
- ⦿ No 'plan B' to maternity hospital at St Vincent's, Harris admits
- » GPs oppose proposals for HSE-salaried doctors
- » Government fears St Vincent's set to ditch maternity hospital move

SUBSCRIBE NOW

... have no agenda. Real news has value. [Subscribe.](#)

MORE FROM THE IRISH TIMES

Health	Health	Health & Family	Health & Family
Peter Boylan urged to resign over maternity hospital criticism	Woman died of 'extraordinarily rare' condition at 39 weeks pregnant	'That split second decision will affect so many people. Don't do it'	Drugs from an unlikely source

More from around the web

Promoted stories from Outbrain

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Gamers around the world have been waiting for this game!
Forge Of Empires | 1 Consejo Para Pestañas Mucho Más Largas
www.healthybeauty.io | Wide Range of Rare, Common Variants Affect Blood Metabolites
GenomeWeb | These 6 Presidential Properties Boast For Sale Signs
Mansion Global |
|--|--|---|--|

ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT

SUBSCRIBE NOW
