

28th February 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I was asked to comment on a Parliamentary Question directed to the Minister for Health on the prescription of progesterone therapy at the National Gender Service.

Progesterone is a hormone therapy sometimes sought by trans women and people assigned male at birth as part of their medical transition. Progesterone is an unproven treatment that is associated with additional medical risk. While some people report benefits from progesterone, this evidence is anecdotal. There is no robust scientific evidence to support the use of progesterone therapy in the context of medical transition.

While it is an unproven treatment, progesterone is sometimes offered at the National Gender Service following clinical review and consideration of all of the potential risks and the person's goals. In the event that progesterone is prescribed, the person is informed that there is no scientific evidence that proves it will help with breast growth or have any benefits in terms of health and wellbeing.

The person is also advised that potential medical complications includes clots that can result in stroke or heart attack. These complications can be disabling or fatal. There is also a risk that progesterone might limit breast growth. This is why our usual advice is not to trial progesterone until the person has had the maximum effect from oestrogen. On average, the expected peak effect of oestrogen on breast growth is after two years of continuous therapy.

If knowing the above the person is happy to proceed, and the prescribing clinician is clear that there is no prohibitive risk at the time of prescription, then we prescribe progesterone for a time and goal defined period and schedule ongoing clinical review. The doses are individualised to the patient depending on information such as clinical risk and individual goals.

I trust the above is useful in answering this query.

Yours Sincerely,



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