

SYMPOSIUM ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH -“PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES”

Pharmacy At The Front Line

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In providing communities with easily accessible, reliable and quality healthcare services, a pharmacist is not immune from the challenges presented by certain requests made in the pharmacy that “push the boundaries”... so to speak.

Typically, a pharmacist may be pushed outside his or her comfort zone or expectations of their professional role, by simply presenting a prescription for the “Abortion Pill” or the “Morning After Pill” or for some, even the bread and butter, every day, contraceptive pill. There could be many reasons for this, but these usually fall back on personal values and religious beliefs, overpowering the duty of care owing to the patient – thereby causing an ethical dilemma.

Pharmacists, like all human beings, have the right to moral objection – but not the right to deny access. In fact, in the presence of moral objection the onus is on the pharmacist to provide continuity of care. Some pharmacists also, for lack of engagement or lack of awareness, in particular in the context of introduction of cutting edge medicines or healthcare techniques – are not across all crucial details about formal avenues of access. More needs to be done to be more inclusive and informative to all members of the healthcare team in a holistic manner.

For efficient, functional and empathetic services to the public, it is crucial to include pharmacists in the promotion, training, contemporary debate and resolution of barriers in the introduction of any new moiety that has huge implications on human welfare and wellbeing.