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Media reports over safety of long-acting reversible contraception irresponsible and unwarranted

Concerns over the safety of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) raised by the ABC's *7.30 Report* this week should not be seen as indicative of any widespread problem with these products, one of Australia's leading specialist doctor groups has said.

President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG), Dr Stephen Lane, highlighted that the *7.30 Report* presented the cases of the side effects experienced by two women who used the contraceptive implant (Implanon NXT) and the intrauterine system (Mirena).

"The broadcast failed to point out that in the vast majority of cases these products are used safely and effectively to provide contraceptive protection while reducing period pain and bleeding," Dr Lane said.

"The long-term safety and efficacy of these products are well documented. These devices are not new and their strong positive reputation has been built over many years.

"Long-acting reversible contraception devices have been available on the market and used by women for some 20 years and it is disingenuous to question their safety and reliability based on this media report of two cases."

However, Dr Lane said a key issue for all women and health providers was strong and ongoing communication.

"If a patient reports any issues they should be followed through, and one concern raised by the *7.30 Report* was how long it took for the device to be removed from one of the patients featured in the program," Dr Lane said.

"Women can access immediate review by seeking advice and referral to a specialist from their general practitioner, avoiding waiting periods encountered in the public system.

"As part of the strong relationship between the doctor and patient, any issues the patient raises need to be addressed quickly and appropriately.

"Pharmaceutical Company education and training assists health care professionals to have informed discussions with their patients about the risks and benefits of contraceptives and the most suitable options for them. Appropriate education regarding the use of LARCs benefits women. All education and training payments are reported openly and transparently in accordance with Medicines Australia.

"LARC plays an important role in women's health in preventing pregnancy. Women should not be alarmed by sensationalised reports. I urge women to seek advice directly from their obstetrician and gynaecologist if they have questions."

For all Media Inquiries, please contact NASOG CEO Caroline Khalil on 0400 101 109.

About NASOG: The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) is a not-for-profit professional association representing specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists, the leading providers of specialist women's health services.