The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

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Exploiting the Mailbox: The Fatal Flaw in Virtual Mifepristone Prescribing

Journal:	*New England Journal of Medicine*
Manuscript ID	Draft
Article Type:	Letter about NEJM Article
Date Submitted by the Author:	n/a
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Abstract:	

SCHOLARONE MANUSCRIPTS

The NEJM perspective, “Telehealth Access to Mifepristone — Evaluating Reproductive-Coercion Arguments”, frames mifepristone telehealth access as a vital shield for victims of intimate partner violence, contending that restricting virtual prescribing harms vulnerable women by removing a discreet “escape route” (abortion) from coercive partners.

However, this argument completely ignores the terrifying ease with which domestic abusers can exploit unregulated telehealth channels to force medication abortion onto women without their knowledge or consent.

When mifepristone can be requested online and delivered to a mailbox, the barriers preventing a coercive partner from impersonating a patient, ordering the drug, and clandestinely administering it are dangerously low.

The editorial states that on-line access is vital to true bodily autonomy, but true bodily autonomy cannot exist without informed consent, accurate medical evaluation and supervision, and intervention if signs of coercion and abuse are present, all actions that cannot be adequately performed in a remote environment. Facilitating unmonitored mail-order distribution does not liberate women from violence; it hands their abusers a dangerous tool to exert ultimate control.

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