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The Editor
Independent House
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We are a group of public and private sector doctors from more than 30 countries who treat patients with drug problems. As such, we feel compelled to respond to Ian O'Doherty's writings on February 18 and again on February 22 calling for the sterilisation of people who use drugs.

The bigoted attitude adopted by the author defies belief and his hatred of drug users is so deep that he wishes them dead. We are astonished that a mainstream Irish newspaper would print such a vitriolic and disgusting article.

The preposterous, unethical and inhumane proposal that drug users should be sterilised is reminiscent of the hate literature of the Nazi era. Unfortunately the remarks of Dr Pat Troy were taken up by O'Doherty and used as the basis for a virulent attack on drug users and anyone who might seek to help them including Fr Peter McVerry, a man who has worked tirelessly to help a marginalised and stigmatised group, many of whom are themselves children.

It has been recognized for decades that addiction is a chronic, recurrent, as-yet incurable but eminently treatable condition (note that precisely this definition is accepted almost universally with respect to alcoholism). Sweeping generalizations and vilification are decidedly counter-productive. Instead, compassion as well as societal self-interest should lead to demands that the broadest array of treatment services be made readily available to all who want and need them, and all too often die without them.

We strongly condemn this article and call on Dr Troy as a doctor and as a human being to condemn it also.

Signed,
International Doctors for Healthy Drug Policies