

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** CHN32206  
**Country:** China  
**Date:** 12 September 2007

Keywords: China – Family planning – Sterilisation – Ligation checks

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

---

**Question**

**Please ask an expert if, after sterilisation, women considered to have had too many children are forced into an annual fertility checkup procedure involving the injection of water to test whether it passes through the fallopian tubes, and whether officials would seek out women who had avoided this procedure.**

**RESPONSE**

**Please ask an expert if, after sterilisation, women considered to have had too many children are forced into an annual fertility checkup procedure involving the injection of water to test whether it passes through the fallopian tubes, and whether officials would seek out women who had avoided this procedure.**

Requests for information were sent to several academics, who either did not reply or were not able to assist. A request for information was also sent to Dr Susan E. Short, Associate Professor of Sociology at Brown University, Rhode Island on 3 September (RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Dr Susan Short ([Susan\\_Short@brown.edu](mailto:Susan_Short@brown.edu)) 'Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 3 September – Attachment 4). Dr Short has written extensively on women's health in China and Chinese family planning (for example Short, Susan E. and Fengying Zhai 1998, 'Looking locally at China's one-child policy', *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol.29, No.4, pp.373-387 and Short, Susan E., Ma Linmao, and Yu Wentao, 2000, 'Birth Planning and Sterilization in China', *Population Studies*, Vol.54. No.3. pp.279-291). Her CV and list of publications is at <http://www.s4.brown.edu/s4/PDF/short-cv.pdf>).

Dr Short replied on 5 September (Short, Susan 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information 'Re: Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 5 September – Attachment 5). She stated:

I have not heard of this particular kind of check-up before being used for this reason, and the idea that it would be done until someone was 60 doesn't make sense to me, which of course doesn't mean it isn't possible. I think it unlikely someone would be pursued while living in Australia. However, it is probably best you consult scholars who may be in a better a position to answer these questions...

A request for information was sent to Dr Therese Hesketh, Clinical Senior Lecturer in International Health at the UCL Centre for International Health and Development in London, on 3 September (RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Dr Therese Hesketh ([t.hesketh@ich.ucl.ac.uk](mailto:t.hesketh@ich.ucl.ac.uk)) 'Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 3 September – Attachment 6). Dr Hesketh co-authored a number of articles on health care in China in 1997, including one on family planning (Hesketh, Therese & Wei Xing Zhu 1997, 'The One Child Family Policy: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 314).

Dr Hesketh replied on 4 September (Hesketh, Therese 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information 'Re: Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 5 September – Attachment 7). She gave this response (our questions to her are in bold):

I have answered the questions below. I have checked with two Chinese colleagues so this is a consensus response. ...

**1. Have you heard of the check-up procedure referred to above?**

The procedure, as you rightly say does exist, but it is used to investigate infertility. We have never heard of it used in the way described. The failure rate of tubal ligation is extremely low so it would be pointless and costly to undertake an investigation of this type. In the unlikely event of a woman becoming pregnant after tubal ligation the authorities would make her have a termination.

**2. If so, do you have any more information about it? a. What does it entail? b. Is it still commonly performed in Guangdong?**

My colleague, who knows Guangdong well, has never heard of it being used.

**c. If so, would the authorities require it every year, and for years after women have had children, and until the age of 60?**

Definitely not.

**3. In your opinion, it possible that a woman who has breached family planning laws would be pursued by the Chinese authorities even in Australia to have the procedure?**

Definitely not. There are many large families in China. In some recent data I analysed on fertility over the past 20 years 3.3% of all women had 4 or more children almost all in rural areas. The authorities wouldn't have the resources to follow them up even if they wanted to. Indeed, there is considerable acceptance of larger families in rural areas.

**4. Do you have any information on whether returnees to China are required to have this procedure?**

We have never heard of this.

## List of Attachments

1. Attachment deleted.
2. Deleted.
3. Deleted.
4. RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Dr Susan Short ([Susan\\_Short@brown.edu](mailto:Susan_Short@brown.edu)) 'Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 3 September.
5. Short, Susan 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information 'Re: Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 5 September.
6. RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Dr Therese Hesketh ([t.hesketh@ich.ucl.ac.uk](mailto:t.hesketh@ich.ucl.ac.uk)) 'Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 3 September.
7. Hesketh, Therese 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information 'Re: Information Request about a Family Planning Procedure in China (Ref: CHN32206)', 5 September.
8. Deleted.
9. Deleted.
10. Deleted.