*Science fails to support benefits often associated with male circumcision*

Praising male circumcision

in Kenya, especially in Luo

Nyanza, seems to be the

norm. Even vernacular radio stations

are awash with its “benefits”,

yet there is no scientific evidence to

the effect.

Siaya County chairman of Health

Committee Mathew Odeny has

drafted a Bill to guide the circumcision

of male infants so as to stem

HIV infections (*Nation*, October 3).

My objection to such moves is not

based on culture but on science.

The foreskin has protective,

sensory and sexual functions. It

protects the body from harmful

bacteria and viruses. There is a

gland in the foreskin known as

apocrine that produces anti-bacterial

and anti-viral proteins such as

lyzozyme.

It is found within the mucus that

lies between the glans and foreskin,

and protects against infections like

HIV. Yet it is this mucus that some

people who are pro-circumcision

brand as a dirty carrier of germs

that facilitate HIV infection.

Mucus membranes that line all

body orifices like the nose, vagina,

and ear are the first immunological

defence. To regard this mucus as

dirty is to disregard science.

The foreskin protects the glans

in the same way the eyelids protect

the eyes. It keeps the glans moist

and sensitive. It is this sensitivity

that causes sexual pleasure.

The foreskin contains 20,000 to

70,000 erogenous nerve endings,

which encircle the inner openings

of the foreskin. Circumcision

removes over 75 per cent of

these nerve endings, resulting in

premature ejaculation or erectile

dysfunction.

The moisture provided by the

foreskin facilitates the gliding action

of the penis that reduces friction

and vaginal dryness, thus enhances

orgasm for both partners.

The foreskin contains an erotogenic

sensory nerve-receptor system

that transmits sexual sensation

to the central nervous system and

brain to release hormones into the

blood stream that reduce stress.

When doctors are absorbed in

male circumcision without giving

balanced scientific information as

it happens in Nyanza (Refer too, to

*Nation*, November 16, 2012, p. 35),

it leaves a lot of question marks in

the minds of people who like their

culture to be maintained.

“Why did nature provide the

male offspring with the foreskin?

What are the surgical uses of the

foreskin? What are the theories behind

the genesis of circumcision?”

In the past, for example, the appendix

was considered an inconsequential

organ but it has now been

proved that it helps in the body’s

immune system.

Why must people be informed on

research supporting male circumcision

but not on research dismissing

male circumcision?

**ATIENO KILI, Nairobi**