

ISMUNHK 2017-2018 WHO CHAIR REPORT



TOPIC: FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

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Introduction

Female Genital Mutilation otherwise known as FGM is currently documented to be practiced in 30 countries across the world. FGM is a procedure that is conducted to alter visible female genital organs. Some people refer to it as female circumcision however the procedure and aftermath is different than male circumcision. Although it is more prevalent in African nations, there are also a few countries in Asia and the Middle East who practice FGM. More than 3 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM annually. As the awareness of FGM practices grew, the interest in eradicating the practice increased over the past two decades.

FGM continues to be a practice after thousands of years. It is a deeply entrenched social norm in many communities. Mothers may be educated to believe that FGM is beneficial for their daughter, even when research proves that the practice has no benefits to a girl's wellbeing. Parents who have doubts about the practice often get pressured by their community to force their daughters to undergo FGM.

Key Terms

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- A procedure to either partially or entirely remove the external female genitals. There are four main types of Female Genital Mutilation. Type 1 involves total or partial removal of the clitoris. Type 2 includes the removal of the clitoris and the labia minora. Type 3 is tightening or narrowing the vaginal opening by repositioning the labia minora. Type 4 encompasses all procedures that harm the female genitalia without medical intentions.

Background Information and Key Areas to Consider

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

This awareness day is sponsored by the United Nations, created in 2012. The day takes place on the 6th of February annually. Their campaign ends for ending FGM practices globally by 2030. The day was created to raise awareness for how FGM is a practice decimating girls and women. It also pushes for the notion women and girls have the right to be free from torture and inhuman treatment. This event is also supported by many other famous organizations such as the WHO, Equality Now. It has also managed to involve agencies such as the USAID in 2017.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) create a resolution aiming to eliminate FGM

The resolution was created on the 16th of November 2012. The resolution reminds nations of the African Protocol on Humans and People's rights, because it contains sections stating the elimination of FGM practices in Africa. It also focuses on reinforcing the scientific facts backing up the notion that FGM is in no way beneficial to a girl's psychological and physical health. The resolution also recognizes previous action by Unite to end violence against women. The

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Health Concerns

- FGM has no benefits for the victim's health and it gives great harm to both women and girls in various ways as it damages the normal, healthy female genital tissue and changes the regular functions of a woman's body. This procedure has immediate and long-term consequences. Immediate issues include; severe pain, excessive bleeding, shock, genital tissue swelling, infections, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), urination problems, impaired wound healing, death, psychological consequences. Long term consequences include chronic genital infections, chronic reproductive tract infections, urinary tract infections, painful urination, menstrual problems, keloids, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), female sexual health, obstetric complications, obstetric fistula, perinatal risks and psychological consequences

Key Parties Involved

World Health Organization (WHO)

- The WHO is an international health organization that has been actively fighting against the practice of FGM since the 1990's. In 1997, they collaborated with UNICEF and the UNFPA to issue a joint statement against the practice of FGM. Since then the WHO has also published global strategies for health workers to provide help and support for FGM victims. In addition, the WHO in 2010 worked with the UNFPA and UNICEF to release evidence based guides on how to manage health complications due to FGM. Based on their past action it's evident the WHO isn't just combatting the practice of FGM, they are also directing focus towards the aftermath of FGM.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- UNICEF has directed a lot of their focus towards gathering data and information about FGM and creating accessible reports for organizations and individuals. UNICEF also worked with the UNFPA to create the world's largest program that campaigns against FGM practices. The program pushes countries to implement zero tolerance laws relevant to FGM and working with health care workers to support victims of FGM while preventing the practice. UNICEF also has operations at the local level. They work with local areas with high percentages of girls who have undergone FGM to discuss and garner support for ending this cultural practice.

African Union (AU)

- The African union has shown that they are against FGM procedures being carried out, and they publicly joined the campaign of "International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital" in 2016. They have also tried to make legal changes by including the elimination of harmful cultural practices that affect the welfare of a child in the African charter of Rights and Welfare of a Child. The Maputo Protocol is an African Charter on Human rights, and 53 African countries have signed it and 28 have ratified it. FGM is included in Article 5 of the protocol

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European Union (EU)

- 180,000 annually in Europe are at risk of FGM. While there hasn't been extensive data collected for FGM prevalence rates in Europe, the EU is a major IGO that plays a part in combating the practice. The EU created a commission in 2013 to eliminate the practice of FGM. The EU developed steps to take to promote sustainable social change to prevent FGM, such as taking multidisciplinary cooperation and supporting members states in effective prosecution of FGM practice. They also support various NGOs through funding to combat FGM at a grassroots level. They have also partnered with UNICEF to assist non-EU countries to combat against the practice. Specifically, the European Institute of Gender Inequality collects data and develops knowledge to further provide reliable resources. They hosted a roundtable discussion with various leaders in the campaign fighting against FGM to develop further strategies on March 6th 2013.

Timeline

Date	Place (Optional)	Event
16 November, 2012		The United Nations General assembly created a resolution intensifying global efforts for the elimination of FGM
18 December, 2014		The United Nations General Assembly ratified a resolution, placing a worldwide ban on Female Genital Mutilation
May, 2016		UNICEF and UNFPA collaborated with the WHO to create a program tackling FGM through evidence based guidelines.
6 February		This day was marked by the UN and agreed along with 16 African nations that this day would be known as the “International day of zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation”. This awareness day was created to help spread the campaign of preventing FGM by 2030.

Possible Solutions

Solution 1: Successfully get the government to enforce laws affiliated to female circumcision and to ensure citizens are aware of the laws in place.

- **Pros:** many communities will stop or decrease the practice of FGM in fear of getting in trouble with the law. It's always especially effective if people know they are at risk of fines and/or jail time. This way the number of girls who undergo this procedure will be able to decrease rapidly
- **Cons:** if a government is corrupt and slow to enforce laws, this will not be the most effective clause. Overall, unless the government is willing to carry out policies it would have a minimal impact on the practice.

Solution 2: Directly educate citizens living in FGM prevalent communities about the misconceptions of FGM, and how in reality it proposes serious health and psychological issues.

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Solution 2: Directly educate citizens living in FGM prevalent communities about the misconceptions of FGM, and how in reality it proposes serious health and psychological issues.

- **Pros:** rather than just enforcing laws, citizens will understand why female circumcision is detrimental for a girl's physical and mental wellbeing. By approaching this issue at a local level, people would be more willing to actively fight against FGM.
- **Pros:** Culture is always changing. If younger generations receive the opportunity to learn more about the hazards of FGM they may play more of an active role and fighting against traditions.
- **Cons:** Community elders along with males may object the education provided, as they feel like it is a vital aspect of their culture and necessary to keep women obedient. They may just retaliate by censoring the information.

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