

Another Young Life lost because of Female Circumcision

On Monday the 10th June 2013 another article in the Egyptian Newspaper reported that another 13 year old Egyptian girl died in Cairo, 15 minutes after being circumcised in a hospital.

Around 6000 girls are circumcised each day around the world. Some die with out a mention that it is from Female Circumcision.

In 1994, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN) called for the abandonment of Female Circumcision, also known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

With so much evidence found in reports from the World Health Organization, confirming the harmful effects of Female circumcision to girls and women's health, supporting the call to stop this practice, one would think that this harmful tradition would have stopped by now.

Female Circumcision/FGM is any procedure done to a female's external genitalia for cultural or religious reasons.

Female Genital Mutilation is done in different cultures for different reasons.

While non of the religious books: e.g. Torah, Bible and Quran call for female Circumcision, some Islamic Clerics who support the practice claim it is a requirement in Islamic teachings.

The NSW Education Program on FGM has been working, since 1995 to raise awareness in Communities who have come from cultures and countries that practice female Circumcision/FGM and have settled in Australia. The program works to inform women and men of the harmful effects of Female Circumcision/FGM and the NSW Law against FGM.

There are 4 basics types of Female Circumcision/FGM:

Type I

Excision of the prepuce, with or without excision of part or all of the clitoris (**clitoridectomy**).

Type II

Excision of the clitoris with partial to total excision of the labia minora (**Excision**).

Type III

Excision of part or all of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of the vaginal opening (**infibulation**)

Type IV Unclassified:

Pricking, piercing, or incising of the clitoris and/or labia

Stretching of the clitoris and/or labia

Cauterisation by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue

Scraping of the tissue surrounding the vagina (gishiri cuts)

Many harmful side effects of Female Circumcision continue to affect a women's health from the time the procedure is done and throughout her life.

Some of these side effects include:

Immediate effects at time of procedure:

Violent pain
Hemorrhage from rupture of the blood vessels of the clitoris
Post operative shock leading to death
Damage to other organs, e.g. urethra, anal sphincter/vaginal walls
Acute urine retention
Fractured clavicle, femur and humerus
Septicemia/ Tetanus/ HIV and Hepatitis B

Long Term Effects:

Difficulty in Urinating
Formation of a neuroma (Inflamed swollen nerve ending: very painful)
Painful intercourse
Lack of sensation during sexual intercourse
Keloid scarring (thick knotted hard scars)

Long Term Complications

Dysmenorrhea (very painful periods)
Chronic infections of uterus and vagina
Incontinence/Fistula
Problems in pregnancy and child birth including:
Increased likelihood of caesarean section
Prolonged labor
Perineal tearing
Increased risk of baby dying at birth
Infertility

All types of Female Circumcision are against the Law in Australia.

In NSW, Legislation against FGM is under the Criminal Act and is punishable by up to 7 years in Prison. Any one who organizes for it to be done, or pays for it to be done, or performs the procedure or advises to do it, will be prosecuted and imprisoned, if found guilty.

It is also against the law to take a female child overseas and perform FC/FGM on her while she is out of Australia.

The NSW Education Program on FGM also works with professional doctors, nurses and health service providers to equip them with the ability to provide assistance and the best medical care for women and girls who are suffering from harmful side effects from Female Circumcision/FGM.

For more information or assistance please contact the NSW Education Program on FGM on (02) 9840 3877 or (02) 9840 3910.

For more information on our program:
www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/fgm

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