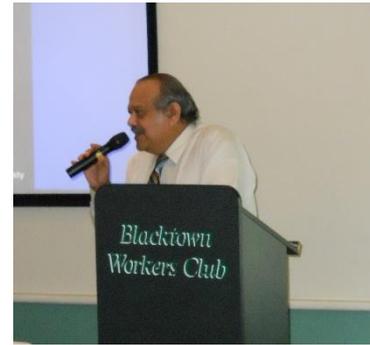


Dr Ramsis Gayed , Sudanese born, Australian Medical Doctor migrated to Australia in 1989. Dr Gayed attained his initial Medical Degree from the University of Khartoum, Sudan. He was accredited by the Australian Medical Council, to work as a Doctor in Australia, shortly after arriving in Sydney.



Dr Ramsis Gayed currently works as a General Practitioner at a private Medical Clinic in Liverpool, New South Wales. The following interview was held with Dr Ramses Jayed around the topic of FGM

1. Dr Jayed, What do you think about the cultural historical background of FGM, where did it really come from?

FGM is a really old practice that has been practiced for thousands of years with different names. At a stage it was called the Pharaonic circumcision and the name of course gives us an idea that it comes from a very old traditional practice that was practised maybe during the pharaohs time, thousands of years ago, and it was documented in some of the old hieroglyphic writings that's why they called it Pharaonic, so we know that it has been practiced for thousands of years in Africa, in other parts of Africa as well as in other nations like in India and other cultures. So it has got its origins in very old cultures, in Africa the Middle East and in different other parts of the world

2. What made you, a male doctor, become the Ambassador for FGM and what's the percentage of women and girls who undergo this practice let's say in Sudan and Egypt

Maybe, I will start first, with the percentage and then I will talk about why I became interested or the ambassador for the FGM. I come from Sudan, I have practiced in Sudan and I have rarely seen a female that was not circumcised. So, if I want to put a percentage, although it is not scientifically accurate, I would have to say about 95% of the women I have seen in Sudan were circumcised one way or another. This percentage of course is different in Australia. In northern parts of Sudan 95% were circumcised, that's different from the southern part of Sudan where the practice is less prevalent.

Now because of this big number of ladies that are suffering from this condition I have decided to act against such horrific act and practice. I consider it as something against the women's right to live a normal life.

3. What are the psychological implications of FGM practice?

There are effects that are immediate and there are effects that are long term effects. Now imagine a child playing peacefully and suddenly somebody comes and take her to a strange place where they tie her down and suddenly they take her underwear off and she sees strange tools. She gets something done to her and suddenly she is bleeding and she is in a lot of pain and sometimes they need to tie her legs together afterwards to stop the bleeding. Imagine the amount of psychological trauma that

such a child goes through. Imagine the amount of fear and horror she would dream of for nights and nights. For some women it will continue until they are in their late 30s and 40s and they cannot forget this event. So it is an event of direct emotional trauma to the child and that can live in their memories for a long time. Scientifically those girls can suffer from what we call post-traumatic stress disorder, which is a known disorder and they get flashback dreams of this experience and it's a very painful experience as well as the physical effects. That in itself can cause a lot of disruption to the family unit and the disruption of the family unit in turn will cause more psychological trauma to those ladies

4. What are the physical implications of the FGM practice; we hear of dislocation of bones, wrong cutting, bleedings etc.

Now, immediately on the event of circumcision or the FGM; how they have to force the girl down and to open her legs. The girls are friable creatures and doing this to them can cause a lot of trauma physically and to different parts of her body, the legs, and the hip bones. That's why there is such a hazard. Then using instruments that are sometimes (especially in places like the 3rd world countries) tools may not be very well cleaned or sterilised so it ends up with a lot of infections. Blunt instruments may be used and that can cause a lot of trauma to the area and bleeding can continue for days and even death. Infections like tetanus infections, from bleeding, from urinary infections, all this can be an immediate physical effect from these procedures. The wrong cutting can lead to trauma in the different parts of that area including the urethra so it there are a lot of immediate physical effects of the FGM.

5. What are the future medical implications of FGM

As we said that there are different types of FGM, as we heard earlier or we read earlier. Now in the severe ones, like infibulation, where it is sutured and the vaginal opening is very narrow now. There is a lot of effects on urinary systems, so the ladies tend to get a lot of urinary tract infections. There are some circumstances where the hole is very tight and that will affect the flow of their periods. We get problems due to the period being retained in the vagina causing more infections. There are difficulties with these infections which can cause infertility or subfertility and becomes yet another problem. Now when the ladies get married, there is the first night of marriage which is a horror night for them. They will either need to be de-circumcised, or to go through another procedure where they reopen the circumcision. Otherwise, if that's not done then the male will need to take a month or two to be able really to penetrate properly the area and there is a lot of force used which leads to a lot of trauma psychologically as well as physically to the lady and the first night memories are no longer pleasant memories. Fear starts to develop in those ladies from the sexual relationship. We know that these sensitive areas are really important for orgasm. I have seen ladies that have been married for 20 and 30 years and when asked when the last time they had a proper relationship was, they say they never actually felt orgasm. That could be the consequence of a bad pharaonic type of FGM and now there is a lot of research to prove that, orgasm in itself is a very important part of the life of a woman because during orgasm they found that over 20 centres in the brain become very highly active. That improves the

oxygenation of the brain and it improves the wellbeing of the lady, it works as a antidepressant as well as other activities. So orgasm in itself is a really important part of the female life.

It is known as well now, from research that female's orgasm helps get the sperm to the side where the ovulation is happening. So if the ovulation is happening on the left side during the orgasm, you find there is special forces to pull the sperm to that side. Accordingly it's important to the fertility. So not having the orgasm does affect fertility, so by removing this part of the body partly or totally that affects all what I have just mentioned and it has got serious implication on the female life. (Then when they get pregnant and they come through to deliver). Delivery is a big problem in circumcised ladies. We need to do a (de-infibulation) at the time of labour which is more trauma to the area and its more pain during an already painful process of delivery. After delivery in the countries of the 3rd world, ladies in many cases request to be tightened or sutured back to the normal so that again has added trauma after delivery as there is sutures and pain and added risks to the mother. So these are all long term implications to the procedure

6. There is a new change in the law in NSW regarding FGM and that the penalty has been changed from 7 years to 21 years imprisonment. What will you as a Doctor advise parents when they ask you to perform the procedure or tell you that they want to circumcise their children abroad or at home?

Well, I mean 21 years imprisonment, I doubt that any doctor would think of doing that even if he believes in doing this practice. I myself, will definitely not engage and have never been engaged in any of this practice. I will not advise the parents to do this procedure either in Australia nor outside Australia because this is an abuse to their child and when they come back to the country and I know that they have done the procedures to their kids I am obliged by the law to report that. This is considered as an abuse to the child and by law I have to report any case of abuse to the authorities which will definitely have a very serious implication on the parent and the whole family.

Thank you very much Dr Ramsis