

# Ending Female Genital Cutting/ Mutilation: A Movement

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Female Genital Cutting (FGC) or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has affected over 20 million women worldwide and it is estimated 30 million girls are currently at risk in the next decade to undergo the procedure. In the United States alone, over 500,000 women and girls are currently at risk due to the practice of sending young females abroad for the procedure, often referred to as “vacation cutting.” This procedure is not deemed a medical procedure and results in life long complications. The practice involves injury to or the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, and can be classified into 4 types varying in severity. The procedure is linked to socio-cultural practices, hygiene and aesthetic purposes, spiritual influences, and psycho-sexual depression. Even though there are cases where women choose to undergo the procedure, the procedure is mostly exercised on young girls under the age of 15 who are unaware of the procedure and the resulting complications. Early complications include infection, bleeding, urinary retention, and varying degree of musculoskeletal trauma. These complications then magnify as the girls mature to include sexual dysfunction, depression, anxiety, menstrual difficulties, scarring, and pain. In cases where infibulation occurs, even the smallest speculum cannot enter the vaginal canal. Women then have to undergo further procedures (de-infibulation) or cutting to engage in sexual intercourse or childbirth.

This is a human rights violation and as healthcare professionals we need to educate ourselves on the procedure and the resulting health risks in order to give our patients the best care possible. Screening begins in the office; by addressing the procedure and asking the necessary questions, further risks and complications, from initial procedure to perinatal care, can be avoided.

For more information: <http://www.equalitynow.org/issues/end-female-genital-mutilation>

Citations: Mishori, Ranit MD, MHS, FAAFP. “The ABC’s of Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation: What Clinicians Need to Know.” AAFP Global Health Workshop 2016, American Academy of Family Physicians, 8 Sept. 2016, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta, GA. Conference Address.

“What is FGM?” Equality Now. 2 Oct. 2016, [http://www.equalitynow.org/what\\_is\\_FGM](http://www.equalitynow.org/what_is_FGM).



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