



Female Genital Mutilation

(International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

Editorial Comment)

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INTRODUCTION

Among the set of 17 Sustainable goals of development for the world's future, through 2030, full human rights for all women and girls is one of the target which has to be fulfilled by the end of this promising year. But still gender inequality and discrimination is deeply rooted across the globe. Though everyone has right to control their own bodies; still frightful procedures are ongoing in many of the countries worldwide. Among these procedures, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the one of the procedure which is prevalent as a culture based ritual by ethnic groups in many countries such as in the Africa and the Middle East, but FGM also occurs in North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. It reflects gender inequality with discrimination against women and girls. Due to which it is known internationally as violation of the human rights of girls and women.^{1,2}

According to a report by the World Health Organization, approximately 120-140 million women have been subjected to FGM and 3 million girls are at risk each year, which seems to be quite high. This practice is considered to be a fatal/life threatening procedure because of its serious health complications including lethal hemorrhage. Moreover this intolerable practice harms the basic rights towards health, physical security and even their torturous life due to cruel, inhuman behavior which might lead to death.²

What is Female genital mutilation?

FGM is basically a procedure which involves the altering or injuring of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. According to WHO female genital mutilation is defined as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons."^{3,4}

Health consequences

This FGM procedure is done with the help of knife

or razor by a traditional circumciser with or without the use of anesthetics. Approximately, around 125 million women and girls in African countries and the Middle East have been through FGM. This procedure leads to serious health consequences like chronic pain, recurrent infections, painful urination, cysts, menstrual problems, keloids, infertility, AIDS, STDs perinatal risks, and lethal hemorrhage. It may also effect the psychological health of the females as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) includes depression, anxiety which commonly occur in the females. Not only these complications, post FGM difficulties like gynecological issues often result in an increased risk of difficult labour with postpartum hemorrhage.^{2,4,5}

Control or prevention

Worldwide more than 200 million women and girls are living with the consequences of FGM and its complications.⁶ According to half of the available data, the girls are cut before the age of fifteen or five in some of the countries where this practice is more commonly known.

To overcome this problem UNICEF took the global initiative to accelerate the abandonment of FGM focuses on 17 African countries with joint efforts from UNFPA, so every year 6th February is celebrated as FGM day to create awareness and to promote zero tolerance towards female genital mutilation. Every year this day is celebrated internationally with theme so that the rights of women and their bodies, as well as the protection of their physical health can be maintained.^{1,2,7}

Recommendations

Despite of many efforts still we are lacking behind in many of the programs. Therefore harmonized and organized efforts are required on urgent basis so as to involve all of the communities and their members in order to focus on human rights and gender equality.

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