

# Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)



Amnesty International (Sweden)

## Factsheet for Women



# What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

Female Genital Mutilation is any procedure which involves the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is a tradition practised in 28 African countries and parts of Asia and Latin America. Justifications for FGM include custom, cleanliness, religion (no religion advocates FGM), preservation of virginity and social acceptance especially for marriage.

Many women believe that FGM is necessary to ensure acceptance by their community; they are unaware that FGM is not practised in most of the world.

## Who is at risk?

School-age girls in the UK from ethnic minorities especially Somali, Sudanese and Ethiopian where up to 98% of women have been circumcised.

It is estimated that in the UK there are approximately **20,000 girls under the age of 15 at risk of FGM every year.**

Women who have undergone FGM may also need medical attention or other support such as counselling.

Acknowledgments:

Text adapted from NHS Bristol Public Health leaflet

Picture on front cover: Amnesty International (Sweden)

# FGM and the Law

All types of FGM have been illegal in the UK since the 1985 Female Circumcision Prohibition Act. The new Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) updates and extends the original act.

It is now 'an offence to take UK nationals and those with permanent UK residency overseas for the purpose of circumcision, to aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM. It is illegal for anyone to circumcise women or children for cultural or non-medical reasons.'

A person convicted of an offence under the FGM Act 2003 is liable to imprisonment for up to 14 years.

## Health Implications

Short term health problems include:

- severe pain
- bleeding
- infection
- unable to pass urine
- increased risk of HIV and other blood-borne viruses
- Long term health problems include:
- recurrent pelvic infections
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- menstrual problems
- Problems with pregnancy and childbirth
- Difficulties with sex
- Psychological problems including depression and PTSD

**An estimated 10% of victims die from short-term effects and 25% from recurrent problems.**

# Useful Contacts

- **Peterborough Children's Services 01733 864180 & 01733 864170**
- **Cambridgeshire Children's Services 0345 045 1362**
- **Out of Hours - Emergency Duty Team 01733 234724**
- Police Child Protection Team 101 or in an emergency dial 999
- NSPCC 24 Hour Help line Tel 0800 800 5000
- **FGM Helpline** 0800 028 3550 or email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)
- **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
Telephone: 020 7008 1500  
From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 1500
- FORWARD - The Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development - for African women & girls. Tel: 020 8960 4000  
[www.forward.org.uk](http://www.forward.org.uk)

For the UK Government multi-agency practice guidelines on tackling and preventing female genital mutilation visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-multi-agency-practice-guidelines>

To download this leaflet, visit the Local Safeguarding Board 's website [www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk)

