

Introduction

Traditional practices constitute a major influence on the health of the individual and of the community. Certain traditional practices are no doubt useful, others are harmless and some are positively dangerous. Female genital cutting, which is one of these traditional practices (*The Egyptian Journal of Community Medicine, 1989*).

The practice of female genital cutting in 1995 was 97% in Egypt (*Demographic and Health Survey, 1995*).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines female genital cutting as all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non therapeutic reasons (*Little, 2003*).

Local midwives and operators routinely perform the procedure on girls between the ages of 6 and 12 years, however, in small regions, it is performed on newborns, adolescents, and adults (*Nour, 2004*).

This tradition transcends all religious, socioeconomic and geography. It is reinforced by customary beliefs, including ensuring marriageability, chastity, hygiene, preserving fertility, and enhancing sexual pleasure for men (*El-Dareer, 1982*).

Female genital cutting has been classified into 4 types: (Nour, 2004)

Type I: Known as "Sunna" involves the excision of the prepuce and partial or total clitoridectomy.

Type II: Involves clitoridectomy and partial or total excision of the labia minora

Type III: Also known as "Pharaonic" circumcision, involves clitoridectomy, excision of the labia minora labia majora. Infibulation is a reapproximation of the raw edges creating a neointroitus (new opening).

Type IV: Includes other forms of genital manipulation such as burning, pricking, or piercing.

Girls who have undergone female genital cutting can be at a lifetime risk for complication. These health risks depend on the severity of the procedure, its sterile nature, the operator's skill, the instruments used, and the postoperative care of the incision (Nour, 2004).

Bleeding as a result of unligated artery can lead to anaemia, hemorrhage, hypotension and shock or death (Divie and Lindmark, 1992), acute infections have led to high grade fever, tetanus (2%) (Agugua and Egwata, 1982), cellulitis (15%), wound infection, and poor healing (El-Darrer, 1983).

Urinary retention (12%) and laceration of the urethra, bladder, vagina, and rectum have been documented, the long-term complications include urinary tract infection, fibrosis, chronic vaginal infections, dyspareunia, vaginismus which lead to infertility (*Divie and Lindmark, 1992*).

Illiteracy and lack of knowledge about female genital cutting were risk factors in having an attitude favouring female genital cutting. So, the more educated the woman, the more informed she is about her nature, the more active socially and economically she is the more she sees the health hazards of female genital cutting and looks upon it as an unnecessary habit (*Morris, 1996*).

In the last years female genital cutting is a subject received international media attention. Many says and opinions appear about it between objectors and supporters.

This variety in says appears in our Arabic Islamic countries and also in western un Islamic countries.

The western world as American & British prohibit female genital cutting at international level.

Also some Islamic nations as Egypt over turned a ban on practice of female Genital cutting and refuse it in common

hospitals and also in out patient clinics, and runs in all directions to prohibit it whether in policy or mass media a lot of conferences were made to encourage this direction since 1997 till now the year 2003 was called : “**The year of the girl**”.

Since 1997 this was a subject for the different opinions from medical & religious side of view.

So the decision was difficult for general public especially this ban was newly born in countries used to practice this act thousands year a ago in high percentage reached 97% in Egypt. And in countries believe that this is a religious act.

So these researches well try to explain this subject from medical & Islamic views.