



## Danish Medical Association Declares Circumcision "Ethically Unacceptable"

The Danish Medical Association called for routine male circumcision to be barred until a boy is old enough to choose for himself and give his informed consent. The organization said circumcision performed for no medical reason is "ethically unacceptable", unless the individual being circumcised has consented. When parents have their sons circumcised, it robs boys of the ability to make decisions about their own bodies, and to choose their cultural and religious beliefs for themselves. [www.laeger.dk](http://www.laeger.dk), 12/2/16.

## Genital Mutilation is Child Abuse

The head of the UN Population Fund described female genital mutilation as child abuse. Dr. Babatunde Osotimehi told the BBC that the custom is a human rights abuse and needs to end immediately. "There is absolutely no reason to cut anybody, and it seemed to us that it is part of the gender imbalance that has always existed in these communities which are based on patriarchy." The organization has referred to the practice as a human rights violation, but stopped short of calling it abuse. [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com), 17/23/16.

## UN Committee against Torture Investigating IGM in USA and Australia

The UN-Committee against Torture (CAT) started an investigation of intersex genital mutilations (IGM) in both the USA and Australia under Article 16 of the Convention ("inhuman treatment" falling under the prohibition of torture). The USA and Australia have been formally asked to provide statistics on IGM and to "indicate which criminal or civil remedies are available for people who have undergone involuntary sterilisation or unnecessary and irreversible medical or surgical treatment." Both State parties must explain themselves in written reports due in 2017. Intersex advocates are expecting stern reprimands for both states. Both InterACT and OII Australia submitted NGO reports substantiating the ongoing practice in both countries. [www.StopIGM.org](http://www.StopIGM.org), 1/14/17.

## UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the Committee on the Rights of the Child states: "The Committee recommends that the State Party...Ensure that no one is subjected to unnecessary medical or surgical treatment during infancy or childhood; guarantee bodily integrity, autonomy and self-determination to children concerned and provide families with intersex children with adequate counseling and support." 'Harmful Practices', Item 47(c), 7/11/16.

## Israeli Health Ministry Recommends Against Metzitzah B'Peh

Headed by ultra-Orthodox Minister, Rabbi Yakov Litzman, the Israeli Health Ministry, plans to distribute a document to new parents about the risks and benefits of circumcision. It will recommend against metzitzah b'peh, which doctors say increases by 350% the risk of infecting a newborn with the herpes simplex virus. Since 2000, 24 herpes cases, including two brain-damaged infants and two deaths have been reported in New York. [www.jewishpress.com](http://www.jewishpress.com), 3/3/16.

## Rabbis Perform Peaceful Welcoming Rituals

A growing number of rabbis feel that circumcision is no longer appropriate in the 21st century and perform covenant ceremonies without cutting. These include rabbis in the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and other branches of Judaism. Rabbi Nathan Segal said, "I believe circumcision is a major mistake...Just as we no longer practice animal sacrifices in the traditional temple, so let us not sacrifice an important piece of our mammal in the temple of tradition." [www.jewishbusinessnews.com](http://www.jewishbusinessnews.com), 3/13/16.

## African Men Speak about Circumcision Harm

Prince Hillary Maloba, Director of the VMMC Experience Project, conducted more than 90 interviews in Uganda and Kenya with voluntary medical male circumcision subjects, objectors, sex workers, and affected community members. Some acquired HIV following the surgery they were told would protect them. Others lost circumcised relatives to AIDS. At least two were circumcised in non-medical settings, believing it would prevent HIV, although unsterile practices increased their risk. Sex workers are dealing with coercion and even rape by circumcised men claiming to be 'HIV-free.' Many men revealed things to Prince Hillary that they would never tell a western researcher. It's an intimate view into their lives and cultures, and it exposes the harm and failure of the circumcision-to-prevent-AIDS agenda in Africa. <https://www.facebook.com/The-VMMC-Experience-Project-364182520612014/>, 12/1/2016.

## Farewell to Jonathon Conte



After Jonathon's opposition to circumcision was reported in the SF Chronicle, he lost his job. He spent the rest of his life speaking on behalf of infants and children so they would not suffer the physical and psychological pain he had endured. Eventually, his torment caused him to end his own life, 5/9/16, at the age of 33.

## Letter from the Editor

### Dear Friends and Supporters of Genital Autonomy – America,

This is our first *GA–America Annual Newsletter*. We have moved from saying "No" to circumcision to saying "Yes" to genital autonomy. And, while NOCIRC was the first clearinghouse for circumcision in the USA to raise consciousness about circumcision of male infants, Genital Autonomy – America is working to raise consciousness about protecting the bodily integrity and genital autonomy rights of *all* infants and children—male, intersex, and female.

People have begun to realize that some individuals do not conform to a "constructed" binary gender system, and that all children need to be protected until they are old enough to grow up and make personal choices about their own bodies. It's not their bodies that need changing, it's our attitudes about our children's bodies that need changing!

We hope that calling upon everyone to recognize the inherent right of all children to genital autonomy and the importance of protecting their rights, we will help raise awareness. The rights we extend to *any* person are the rights we must extend to *every* person.

As we began to work with Genital Autonomy organizations in Europe, we recognized that they have the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* to back their efforts. Meanwhile, the USA has signed but not yet ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, leaving us to work to defend the genital integrity rights of children without international sanctions.

To help with the founding of GA - America, Tim Hammond (Intactivist pioneer, producer, and director of the documentary, *Whose Body, Whose Rights?*, and author of the *Circumcision Harm Documentation Survey*) has been voted

onto the Board of Directors of GA-America and has accepted the role of Vice President. Tim is working closely with me to establish Genital Autonomy America. Sheila Curran, RN, co-founder and Secretary/Treasurer of NOCIRC since it was founded in 1985, has resigned from that position but, thankfully, will remain on the Board of Directors of GA–America. Kate Edmiston will take over the responsibilities of Secretary/Treasurer. Kate has volunteered for NOCIRC since it was founded and has worked for the organization for more than a decade as bookkeeper, and as my assistant. We welcome the newcomers to the Board of GA–America and are grateful that Sheila Curran and Jim Snyder, MD, remain on the Board.

Our first Genital Autonomy – America Summit working group met November 12 and 13, and we developed our vision and mission statements, which are published in the new GA–America pamphlet and can be seen on our website at [www.gaamerica.org](http://www.gaamerica.org). Copies are available upon request. Our website committee is working to complete our revised website as quickly as possible. It will contain information about our organization, publications, symposia, and news updates. Our second Summit met on February 11 and 12 to further our organizational development.

I want to especially thank each of you for supporting us as we make a transition from working to protect baby boys in America to working to protect the inherent right of *all* children to genital autonomy. Your support is what makes our efforts possible! We are grateful for each person and every organization working to end genital cutting of infants and children.

With appreciation and gratitude,



## Letters to the Editor

"I'm still interested in the persistence of circumcision in spite of all the resistance. You must have noticed that all religions have areas of irrationality. Nevertheless, these irrationalities are defended with great determination. So it is with Judaism and the ritual of circumcision. By all standards of civilization the rite is cruel and brutish, and no connecting of it with Abraham or the need for identity can change that fact. Yet, because the ritual is a major practice of a religion, criticism even discussion is off limits. This silence provides a certain legitimacy to its general practice. Thus, combating the practice is made more difficult. Embedded in a religion, criticism of circumcision is made almost impossible. We usually try to avoid being accused of antisemitism." – James Robertson, EDD, Rocklin, California, USA.

"Even if circumcision had nothing to do with genitals, people in relatively democratic countries would balk at the idea that an unnecessary operation is being pushed, at such high costs, on people who wouldn't accept it otherwise. It's especially odious in a country where people have limited access to healthcare that really would save their lives. It's shocking that people die of things they wouldn't suffer from if they had adequate food,

clean water, decent accommodations, and a clean and healthy environment." – Simon Collery, Arusha, Tanzania, Africa."

"In regions in Kenya and Uganda where Voluntary Male Medical Circumcision (VMMC) is carried out, HIV is high, as are deaths from AIDS. VMMC is a failed project, yet it is pushed, with the increase in HIV/AIDS keeping the HIV/AIDS business alive. A serious problem is that young school boys are cut without parental consent and, after being cut, the boys receive no further treatment or support. Circumcision has increased HIV in those regions where VMMC has been implemented. Sex workers say that intact males feared HIV and used condoms but since VMMC, males refuse to use condoms, thinking they cannot get HIV. Sex workers charge more for unprotected sex but are now infected with HIV and transmit it to clients. VMMC has failed and must be banned in Uganda and Kenya before AIDS wipes us out. – Hillary Maloba, 6/12/16.

"Our duty is to insist, absolutely, without compromise, that every child, male and female, owns his or her own body, and that no one - no one - ever has the right to cut into that body for so-called religious or cultural reasons. We know we're going to continue losing many, but we must never concede any." – Leonard Glick, MD, PhD, 6/1/16.

### Article 14, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

### ENGLAND

**London** – Top female Family Division Judge, Mrs. Justice Roberts, agreed with the 34-year-old mother of two boys, six and four, that circumcision should be a choice left until the children are old enough to decide for themselves. The boys' 36-year-old Algerian father failed in his High Court of England and Wales bid to have his young sons circumcised in accordance with his strict Muslim faith. (See [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Fam/2016/849.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Fam/2016/849.html).) The judge said, "First and foremost, this is a once and for all, irreversible procedure. There is no guarantee that these boys will wish to continue to observe the Muslim faith. I am simply deferring that decision to the point where each of the boys themselves will make their individual choices once they have the maturity and insight to appreciate the consequences and longer term effects of the decisions which they reach." The judge, in her decision in London following a hearing in Exeter, said the identities of the parents and the boys must remain secret. [www.telegraph.co.uk/news](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news), 4/19/16.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reprimanded the UK and Nepal for facilitating intersex genital mutilations, which the Committee views as a 'harmful practice' and 'violence against children', obliging both states 'to explicitly prohibit by law and adequately sanction or criminalize' IGM practices. In addition, Nepal is obliged to combat 'the high levels of stigma and discrimination faced by intersex children', particularly in schools. [www.stopIGM.org](http://www.stopIGM.org), 6/22/16.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reprimanded France for intersex genital mutilations (IGM). This was the first time the Committee condemned IGM as a 'harmful practice', the third UN reprimand for France for IGM practices, and the 15th UN reprimand for IGM practices. [www.stopIGM.org](http://www.stopIGM.org), 8/24/16.

### FRANCE

**Paris** – A French man, who was circumcised for phimosis in 2007 at the age of 26, won a conviction against the surgeon who circumcised him. The court acknowledged sexual and ethical harm following the lack of information on alternatives to circumcision. An investigation revealed the recommendation to circumcise was made "arbitrarily", the surgery was not carried out properly, and the Paris Court fined the surgeon almost 32,000 Euros in compensation for moral damage resulting from lack of information; for physical and mental suffering; for temporary and permanent functional deficit;

and, for sexual harm resulting in "a partial loss of the ability to access pleasure". [www.droitaurcorps.com](http://www.droitaurcorps.com), 6/24/16.

**Tours** – A high court in France recognized a third gender option in the case of an intersex person who was born with both male and female genitalia and has won the right to register as gender neutral. The landmark case was brought before the court by a 64-year-old person who requested anonymity. Their person was assigned male at birth despite having ambiguous genital and realized during puberty that they didn't feel right with the classification. "For 64 years I've lived with both sexes," the plaintiff told the French media, "and today, I finally have the feeling of being recognized for what I am." The plaintiff can change their gender status from "male" to "neutral". The ruling has established legal precedent for people born with ambiguous genitalia. At least ten other countries recognize non-binary gender or sex options in some official capacity, including Germany, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Denmark, and Malta. <http://arclaw.org/newsletter/vol-11/no-3>, Winter 2016/2017.

### MALAWI

**Chikhwawa** – The Malawi Ministry of Health received notice of an intended lawsuit demanding the government, through Chikhwawa District Hospital, pay k10million in damages for the disfigurement, suffering, and loss of amenities of life to a 9-year-old boy due to forced circumcision. The boy, whose name has been withheld, was found by his father after he was dumped close to his home by staff of SSDI, a component of the Ministry of Health, which receives support from USAID for male circumcision. The document, delivered to the Attorney General and Chikhwawa District Hospital, stressed the need for authorities to take the matter seriously, as the paramount aspect was the fundamental right of the minor, which had been violated, and the father was not respected as the parent of the victim. The boy and the other victims had been coaxed by sweets, juices, and biscuits. The father, Mr. Sande, complained that the people involved forcefully circumcised his son against values and customs of the Sena culture. <http://malawi24.com/2016/05/18/circumcision-gone-wrongboy-loses-penis-chikhwawa/>, 5/18/16.

### UNITED STATES

**Denver, Colorado** – In a landmark ruling, a judge found the US State Department violated federal law in denying a passport to US citizen and Navy veteran, Dana Zzyym, who is intersex. Judge R. Brooke Jackson ruled he found "no evidence that the Department followed a rational decision-making process in implementing its binary-only passport policy." Zzyym was represented by Lambda Legal. Several countries, including Australia, India, Malta, Nepal, and New Zealand, offer an option to use the non-specific "X" gender marker as recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization, a UN agency that sets forth international travel document standards. In June, Jamie Shupe became the first legally recognized non-binary person in the U.S.A. when Oregon approved their request for non-binary status on their driver's license. In September, Sara Kelly Keegan followed

## Laws, Lawsuits, & Legislation (cont.)

suit in California. And on 12/2, petitions for non-binary legal recognition were filed by three San Francisco residents, David Strachan, Xin Ferrish, and Char Crawford. <http://oii-usa.org>, 1/15/17.

**New York City, New York** – Reporter Paul Berger and his newspaper, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, asked for the mohel's identity in a Freedom of Information Law request. According to court records, the court ruled a newspaper cannot have the name of the mohel who infected a baby boy with the herpes simplex virus by sucking blood from the baby's penis after circumcising it. The request was also denied by Queens County Supreme Court and, on 3/9/16, by the Brooklyn-based New York Appellate Division's Second Department. In an unsigned opinion, a four-member panel of appellate justices states that the relevant law "expressly exempts from disclosure records that, 'if disclosed would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.'" Berger's appeal failed on the grounds that the mohel's privacy would be violated. [Editor's note: If a mohel is infecting babies with the herpes simplex virus, which can adversely affect or kill a baby, shouldn't his identity be revealed? And, what about the violation of the baby's rights, especially to security of person and religious freedom. [www.courthousenews.com](http://www.courthousenews.com), 3/31/16.

**Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania** – A lawsuit alleges Dr. Stephen R. Glicker cut off a 0.3-inch portion of a newborn's penis, permanently scarring and disfiguring him. The amputated portion was not put on ice, making reattachment impossible. <http://timesleader.com/news/>, 2/24/17.

## ARTICLES

"In order to meet the requirements of international treaty law and allow infant male children the fullest opportunity for self determination, infant male circumcision must be treated under the law and by medical practitioners with the same degree of opposition that female genital mutilation has received." Paul Jerome McLaughlin Jr. Legal and Medical Ethical Entanglements of Infant Male Circumcision and International Law. *Journal of Medical Law and Ethics*, March 2016, 4(1):23-38.

"[W]e would urge physicians to consider that they are licensed and ethically required to respect the autonomy and privacy of their patients and to leave their healthy genitals alone until the patients themselves reach an age of consent." Svoboda JS, Adler PW, and Van Howe RS. Circumcision Is Unethical and Unlawful. *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 44(2016): 263-282.

## Medical News

### CIRCUMCISION HARM SURVEY

"Findings highlight important health and human rights implications resulting from infringements on the bodily integrity and future autonomy rights of boys, which may aid health care and human rights professionals in understanding this emerging vanguard of men who report suffering from circumcision. We recommend further research avenues, offer solutions to assist affected men, and suggest responses to reduce the future incidence of this problem." Tim Hammond and Adrienne Carmack. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 2017, 21(02):189-218 or [circumcisionharm.org](http://circumcisionharm.org).

### MEATAL STENOSIS AND OTHER URINARY STRICTURE DISEASES

Meatal stenosis is more common in circumcised than in intact males. Two nationwide register-based cohort studies conducted by Morten Frisch and Jacob Simonsen, revealed, by conservative calculations, at least 18% of urethral stricture disease (USD) in Denmark, 41% in the UK, 78% in the USA, and 81% in Israel may be attributable to non-therapeutic circumcision. Researchers conclude, "The study provides population-based epidemiological evidence that circumcision removes the natural protection against meatal stenosis and, possibly, other USDs as well." <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.surge.2016.11.002>. [Anatomist and pathologist Dr. Ken McGrath suggests that the loss of blood supply to the meatal tissue following circumcision contributes to this common complication.]

### MEDICALIZATION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

*It has been recognized that stopping the medicalization of FGM is an essential component of the holistic, human-rights-based approach towards the elimination of the practice: when communities see that health-care providers have taken a stand in favour of the abandonment of the procedure and have refrained from performing it, this will foster local debate & questioning of the practice.* – World Health Organization, 2016.

"28 Too Many investigates the growing involvement of health professionals in FGM and in this report highlights what actions need to be taken to reverse this dangerous trend. Medicalised FGM remains a very risky procedure and does nothing to mitigate the fact that this is a severe form of violence against girls and women, a violation of their human rights and has the life-long physical, emotional and sexual implications for survivors." To read the full report on the medicalisation of FGM, visit [www.28TooMany.org](http://www.28TooMany.org)

### MEXICAN STANDARD OF CARE

Issued by the Ministry of Health, the official Mexican standard for care of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum; and newborn person, approved on 4/7/16. Article 5.7.13 states, "**Avoid circumcision as a routine practice, since there is no scientific evidence to prove a direct benefit to the newborn person.**" <http://pediatriaovela.blogspot.com/2016/04/neuva-norma-oficiiana-mexicana-para-la.html>.

### PAIN

Repeated exposure to physical pain can have both short- and long-term adverse effects in newborns, yet providers too inconsistently assess and adequately manage pain in neonates, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics' updated policy statement on preventing and managing procedural pain in infants. The statement's first recommendation is that all institutions have written guidelines for a stepwise plan of pain prevention and treatment in newborns. *Pediatrics News*, February 2016.

### PENILE AMPUTATION

In Malaysia, a doctor accidentally amputated the head of a 9-year old boy's penis, tried to stitch it back on, but didn't align it properly, according to lawyers in Kuala Lumpur. The child was taken to a second hospital for immediate surgery, which was unsuccessful. His penis had to be amputated. Following this incident, a 10-year-old Malaysian boy lost the top part of his penis in a laser circumcision. Malaysia's Health Minister, Dr. Subramaniam urged parents of child victims of botched circumcision to take cases to court to get compensation. <http://nypost.com>, 12/30/16.

### PENILE SENSITIVITY

Bossio JA, Pukall CF, Steele SS. Examining Penile Sensitivity in Neonatally Circumcised and Intact Men Using Quantitative Sensory Testing. *J Urol* 2016, 195:1848-1853. In response:

To the Editor: "Even with its underpowered sample and inadequate choice of cutaneous testing sites the conclusion of the authors that the foreskin is not the most sensitive part of the penis is certainly puzzling in light of figure 2, part A in the article, which shows the foreskin to be significantly more sensitive than any other tested site. The inference that surgical removal of this most sensitive penile segment would not decrease penile sensitivity seems logically and automatically incoherent. – Alexander T. Rotta, Department of Pediatrics, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio.

To the Editor: "...Several of the conclusions of Bossio et al do not follow from their findings. Although several of their tests were underpowered, and the maximum participant age was only 37 years (mean 24.2), the authors make sweeping generalizations regarding long-term implications of circumcision on penile sensitivity. Similarly they state that 'this study challenges past research suggesting that the foreskin is the most sensitive part of the penis,' while at the same time reporting that the 'foreskin of intact men was more sensitive to tactile stimulation.' Finally, the authors conclude that they 'failed to consistently replicate the findings by Sorrells et al across stimuli' when they did, in fact, replicate our findings along the only dimension that was consistent and hence even potentially replicable between the 2 studies, namely assessment of fine touch thresholds.

"The authors struggle to explain some of the results but the histology may help. The glans is innervated mainly by free nerve endings, which primarily sense deep pressure and pain, so it is not surprising that the glans was more sensitive to pain. By contrast, the foreskin has a paucity of free nerve endings and

is primarily innervated by fine touch neuroreceptors, so it was comparatively less sensitive to pain. On a positive note, it is heartening that the term 'intact' has replaced 'uncircumcised, which is considered by many to be a pejorative term.'" – Robert S. Van Howe, Morrie L. Sorrells, James L. Snyder, Mark D. Reiss, and Marilyn F. Milos, Department of Pediatrics, Central Michigan University College of Medicine, Saginaw, Michigan.

Innovus Pharma announced the launch of Sensum+, an over-the-counter (OTC) cream to increase penile sensitivity. Reduced penile sensitivity is associated with various diseases such as hernia surgery, antidepressant use, circumcision, multiple sclerosis, and others. Sensum+, a patented topical formulation, includes a blend of essential oils and natural botanicals, including rose oil, sweet almond oil, cinnamon bark oil, and other extracts. The main ingredient, cinnamon oil, works by activating the Transient Receptor Potential A1 channels responsible for the heat and cold sensation of the skin, resulting in an increase of sensation. [www.empr.com](http://www.empr.com), 9/27/16.

### PHIMOSIS

"Proper diagnosis could prevent unnecessary surgical interventions under anaesthesia and keep the prepuce intact preserving its vital functions." Rahul SK, Behera S, Mohapatra S, Suman P. Importance of Identifying Physiological Preputial Adhesion and Pathological Phimosis as Different Clinical Entities in Children. *Journal of Case Reports*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17659/01.2016.0098>. 8/30/16.

### SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

Due to their total dependence, the ability of the infant to allostatically regulate stressors and stress responses shaped by genetic and environmental factors is severely constrained. We propose that SIDS is the result of cumulative painful, stressful, or traumatic exposures that begin in utero and tax neonatal regulatory systems incompatible with allostasis. We also identify several putative biochemical mechanisms involved in SIDS. We argue that the important characteristics of SIDS, namely male predominance (60:40), the significantly different SIDS rate among USA Hispanics (80% lower) compared to whites, 50% of cases occurring between 7.6 and 17.6 weeks after birth with only 10% after 24.7 weeks, and seasonal variation with most cases occurring during winter, are all associated with common environmental stressors, such as neonatal circumcision and seasonal illnesses. We predict that neonatal circumcision is associated with hypersensitivity to pain and decreased heart rate variability, which increase the risk for SIDS." A "Wear and Tear" Hypothesis to Explain Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Eran Elhaik. *Frontiers in Neurology*, 28 October 2016. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fneur.2016.00180>.

### STUDY OF CIRCUMCISED TURKISH BOYS

"Boys were not adequately informed before circumcision, and this procedure was performed in almost half of the boys at an unsuitable age and outside the hospital environment, and the boys experienced too much pain and fear during the process." Rizalar S, Buyuk ET, and Yildirim N. Children's Perspectives on the Medical and Cultural Aspects of Circumcision. *Iran J Pediatr* (in press).

### ARTICLES

"[A] precautionary approach suggests that non-therapeutic circumcision should generally not be performed until boys can assess the sensitivity of their own foreskins as compared to other parts of the penis – as well as their own role in sexual experience more generally – in light of their own considered sexual preferences and values." Earp BD. Infant circumcision and adult penile sensitivity: Implications for sexual experience. *Trends in Urology & Men's Health*, July/August 2016, 7(4):17-21.

"Jennifer Bossio and her colleagues are to be commended for trying to "objectively" study a complicated issue (although the way they reported their results was woefully misleading). But at the end of the day, sexual experience is largely subjective: different people prefer different things when it comes to sex, and a lot of sexual enjoyment comes down to psychological factors, not penile anatomy.

"That is why there is a growing movement to leave the "circumcision decision" to the individual who will be affected by it, so that he can decide—when he's old enough to understand what's at stake—if he'd rather experience sex and masturbation with an intact penis (however sensitive his particular foreskin turns out to be), or with a modified one (if he wants to go for surgery)." Earp BD. Does Circumcision Reduce Penis Sensitivity? The Answer Is Not Clear Cut. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>, 4/21/16.

"In September of 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Circumcision released its report, which concluded that the benefits of the procedure outweighed the risks. A close analysis of the report reveals the Task Force used a selective, subjective and biased bibliography to support their predetermined conclusions. The Task Force neglected to discuss the anatomy, function, and normal development of the foreskin, nor did they discuss the harm or ethical consequences associated with circumcision. The Task Force deviated from standard practices in its analysis of the medical literature thereby producing a report that falls far below the quality standards set by other AAP policy statements. The report promoted expansion of the procedure as well as the revenue streams for those who perform it. Since release of the report, other national medical organizations have rejected

infant circumcision as unwarranted medically and as ethically unacceptable. No organizations outside of the United States have adopted their conclusions. The report is poorly written, poorly researched, makes unsubstantiated claims, and reaches an illogical conclusion." Van Howe RS. Statement by Statement Analysis of the 2012 Report from the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Circumcision: When National Organizations are Guided by Personal Agendas II. <https://www.academia.edu/23431341/>

"In this brief analysis, we have identified numerous scientific and conceptual shortcomings in the 2012 circumcision policy from the AAP, as well as the more recent draft guidelines issued by the CDC. With respect to the latter, these included: (1) failure to provide a thorough description of the normal anatomy and functions of the penile structure being removed at circumcision (i.e. the foreskin); (2) failure to consider the intrinsic value to some men of having an unmodified genital organ; (3) undue reliance on findings from sub-Saharan Africa concerning circumcision of adult males (as opposed to infants or children); (4) uncritical reliance on a prima facie implausible benefit-risk analysis performed by a self-described circumcision advocate (see Davey et al, in press); (5) reliance on misreported statistics to downplay the problem of pain in the youngest of boys; (6) reliance on incomplete register data to assess the frequency of short-term post-operative complications associated with circumcision, leading to a likely underestimation of their true frequency; and (7) serious underestimation of the late-occurring harms of circumcision presenting months to years after the operation (most notably meatal stenosis). In light of these considerations, we believe that the CDC's overall assessment of benefits versus harms ('risks') of the surgery should be interpreted with extraordinary caution." Frisch M & Earp BD. Circumcision of male infants and children as a public health measure in developed countries: A critical assessment of recent evidence. *Global Public Health*, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2016.1184292; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2016.1184292>.

**Doctors Opposing Circumcision** launched its revised website in 2016. This is an excellent, up-to-date site for parents and professionals. [www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org](http://www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org).

## International News

**Support US ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and join the rest of humanity in helping children live better lives.** [www.childrightscampaign.org](http://www.childrightscampaign.org)

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Yeidy Ramirez Beato, aged four, died after being circumcised at the Maternal Infant Center. His parents, Johanna Beato and Anyelo Ramirez, are searching for answers. The directors at the clinic haven't found a reasonable explanation for the child's death. <http://joseph.4gi.blogspot.com/2016/03/dominican-republic-circumcision-claims.htm>.

### ENGLAND

Figures released by the Health and Social Care Information Centre showed 1,242, newly reported cases of FGM were made in England in the first three months of 2016. More than half of the cases were women and girls in London. Eleven cases were girls who were born in the UK. Dr. Antony Lempert of the Secular Medical Forum said, "Forced genital cutting involves powerful adults with vested interests forcibly removing erogenous, functional, intimate tissue from the healthy body of a vulnerable child whose intimate relationships will be affected lifelong by the practice. In some cases children will suffer horrendous injuries, some will die. In all cases of forced genital cutting, children's basic human rights are denied."

### EGYPT

Raslan Fadl, the first person to be convicted of performing FGM in Egypt following the death of his patient, Souheir al-Batea, turned himself into police 18 months after his January 2015 conviction. He continued to practice medicine after his conviction and, after a plea deal, will serve a 3-month sentence. The 2008 law has lowered the rate of FGM from 74% to 61%. [www.newsweek.com](http://www.newsweek.com), 7/28/16.

### GERMANY

Worldwide Day of Genital Autonomy, honoring the 2012 Cologne High Court Decision to protect infants and children is approaching. This year's focus is on the [vmmcproject.org](http://vmmcproject.org) and the situation of African people. Tess Fish, Prince Hillary Maloba, and Owino Ken have been invited to Cologne to speak. May 6 there will be a full-day gathering in Cologne; May 7, there will be a rally with speeches, a march through the city, and more speeches in the Square at the end of the march; May 8, a scientific conference will be held at Düsseldorf University (mostly in German). For more information, see [www.genital-autonomy.de](http://www.genital-autonomy.de).

### ISRAEL

The World Health Organization granted prequalification on 5/31/16 for the PrePex "painless" circumcision device, created by Israel-based Circ MedTech, for use on males age 13 and above in 14 African countries. The simple device consists of plastic and rubber rings that cut off blood flow to the foreskin, which falls off after a week. [www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 5/25/16.

### IRAN

A 2-year-old baby boy died after he was circumcised in a hospital in Yazd City. The baby received a local anesthetic, was circumcised, taken home, and had no vital signs one hour later. *Hamshari*, 12/16/2016.

### ITALY

A one-month-old Ghanian baby died in a Turin hospital where he was taken after suffering cardiac arrest following a home circumcision. Mustafa Qaddurah, a pediatrician and counselor with the Islamic Cultural Centre of Rome, said Italy's national health system doesn't cover circumcisions performed for cultural, non-medical reasons. "That means you either go to a clinic, where it's expensive. or to these charlatans," Qaddurah said. There were similar deaths recently in Treviso and Puglia. [www.ansa.it](http://www.ansa.it), 5/30/16.

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reprimanded Italy for IGM (intersex genital mutilation) practices, denouncing them as a breach of Article 127 CRPD "Protecting the integrity of the person". <http://StopIGM.org>, 9/5/16.

### KENYA

The Kenya Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (KOGS) and the Africa Coordinating Centre for the Abandonment of FGM/C (ACCAF) called on the Kenyan Government to take action and revoke practicing licenses of medical practitioners and institutions performing FGM. In a statement issued on Day of the African Child (6/16/16), the two bodies also urged the Ministry

of Health and health professionals regulating bodies like the Kenya Nursing Council and the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentist Board to revoke the licenses of their members found to be performing FGM which is illegal in Kenya. *FGM e-Newsletter*, June/July 2016.

**FGM in Kenya: Country Profile Update.** To read the results of the coordinated approach to ending FGM in Kenya, see [www.28toomany.org/countries/Kenya/](http://www.28toomany.org/countries/Kenya/), 12/5/16.

### Massai warrior rallying men to fight FGM



Ole Lelein Kanunga, 28, a Massai leader in Southern Kenya, is working to end FGM. While at a workshop, he learned about a girl who was bleeding uncontrollably after being cut and almost died. He thought, "What if that was my daughter?", and he started a campaign to stop FGM. [positivenews.org](http://positivenews.org), 10/14/16.

### NAMIBIA

Since the program to circumcise 330,000 men by 2025 was officially launched in 2014, just above 30,000 have taken up the offer. Most Namibian men are refusing to let go of their foreskins. Realizing that fewer men were volunteering, the health ministry has been on an aggressive campaign, "But radio is radio. I don't believe everything I hear on the radio," Gottlieb Kalandu says. [www.newsghana.com](http://www.newsghana.com), 7/6/16.

"Recommendation of Circumcision for HIV Prevention is Biased," Ronald Goldman. [www.namibian.com.na](http://www.namibian.com.na), 11/2/16.

### NIGERIA

**Country Profile: FGM in Nigeria.** [www.28toomany.org/countries/Nigeria/](http://www.28toomany.org/countries/Nigeria/).

### PHILIPPINES

More than 300 pre-teen boys were forced to undergo circumcision, known as "tuli", as a mass event in a school in Markina City. The majority of the boys are Roman Catholic, a religion that shuns circumcision. Several years ago, the Filipino city tried to register for the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the largest number of circumcisions, but their application was rejected. "We would like to clarify that we do not, under any circumstance, monitor, endorse, or recognise this type of record attempt", a spokesman said. [www.deccanchronicle.com](http://www.deccanchronicle.com), 4/21/16.

### RUSSIA

On January 9, police announced a criminal investigation into the death of a boy who underwent a home circumcision on January 6, performed by a surgeon summoned by the boy's mother. Anna Kuznetsova, Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights, says the boy's parents must be held accountable regardless of the religious reasons they had for circumcising him or denying him proper medical attention. She told reporters that existing laws against endangering children are sufficient to prosecute those responsible. <https://themoscowtimes.com>, 1/18/17.

### SIERRA LEONE

The recent death of a 19-year-old girl during her initiation has inspired a campaign to end FGM. *Not in My Name*, launched in August, is a joint partnership between Equality Now and a number of other organizations working to empower women to end FGM. *FGM e-Newsletter*, August 2016.

### SOUTH AFRICA

Peter Frederiksen, 63, alleged genital mutilator, documented horrific scenes in his diary of him cutting women's genitals, the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court heard in July. Frederiksen's diary had been confiscated during a raid in his home, along with a video of cutting females genitals and pornographic photos he had taken of children between 8 and 16. He was arrested September 17, 2015, after 21 clitorises were found in the freezer of his home. He is facing 59 charges, along with being investigated for the murder of his 28-year-old wife. [www.news24.com/SouthAfrica](http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica), 7/26/16.

### SWITZERLAND

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women examined Intersex Genital Mutilations in Switzerland and the Netherlands. As a result, the Committee issued stern reprimands to both countries. <http://StopIGM.org>, 11/23/16.

### UNITED STATES

**Sexually transmitted disease (STD)** reached a record high in the USA in 2015, federal officials reported. [www.newsmax.com/Health/Health-News/sexually-transmitted-diseases-high/2016/10/20/id/754444/](http://www.newsmax.com/Health/Health-News/sexually-transmitted-diseases-high/2016/10/20/id/754444/).

**A Call to End HIV/AIDS in America.** Robert C. Gallo, MD, co-discoverer of the AIDS virus. He made no mention of circumcision. [www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-c-gallo-md/a-call-to-end-hiv-aids-in-b\\_12597860.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-c-gallo-md/a-call-to-end-hiv-aids-in-b_12597860.html), 10/24.16.

**The first US Summit to End FGM/C** (female genital mutilation/cutting) was held 2-3 December in Washington, DC. More than 200 million women and girls are affected by FGM, more than half a million live in the USA. It is vital that FGM is part of child protection systems. The summit brought 300 global partners from more than 20 countries survivors, activists, donors, healthcare professionals, educators, law enforcement, lawmakers, child protection, the World Bank, and the UN, all with the common goal of ending FGM/C worldwide by 2030. [www.equalitynow.org](http://www.equalitynow.org), 1/19/17.

**Between Moral Relativism and Moral Hypocrisy: Reframing the Debate on FGM.** by Brian Earp, is an in-depth critique of the World Health Organization and the United Nations' joint policy on FGM. <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/622485>.

**A rigorous comparison of national data** from countries that received funding (\$1.4 billion) under the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) from 2004 - 2013 for education about abstinence with those that got none of the funding showed no difference in the age of first sexual experience or in the number of sexual partners or teenage pregnancies, all aspects of behaviors that have been linked

to a higher risk of becoming infected with HIV. Instead, the study showed that one of the most important factors associated with lower levels of risky behavior was the number of years females remain in school. Another effective measure was treating the infection in pregnant women so they do not pass the virus on to their baby. The government has saved at least a million lives by making anti-HIV medications more widely available to those who need them. The research by Nathan Lo, Anita Lowe, and Eran Bendavid, all at Stanford University School of Medicine, was published in the *May Health Affairs*. [www.scientificamerica.com](http://www.scientificamerica.com), 7/23/16.

**Intact America** held a press conference at Moscone Center in San Francisco in October 2016 after Executive Director Georganne Chapin contacted the AAP prior to their national meeting there. In a recent report, the AAP said babies should not be subjected to unnecessary pain but continues to promote routine infant circumcision, which is not medically necessary and causes unmanageable pain. Intact America collected more than 10,000 signatures on a petition that asked the AAP to tell its doctors to end the pain and stop circumcising baby boys. Georganne Chapin wanted to personally deliver the petition, but her request was denied.

"ACOG, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, released new guidelines to doctors that allows cosmetic labiaplasty to be performed on minors...[C]osmetic surgery to alter the outer appearance of the vulva is most often medically unnecessary. US law states:

"1. [W]hoever knowingly circumcises, excises, or infibulates the whole or any part of the labia majora or labia minora or clitoris of another person who has not attained the age of 18 years shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 5 years or both.

"2. A surgical operation is not a violation of this section if the operations is (b) necessary to the health of the person on whom it is performed, and is performed by a person licensed in the place of its performance as a medical practitioner; or performed on a person in labor or who has just given birth and is performed for medical purposes connected with that labor or birth by a person licensed in the place it is performed as a medical practitioner, midwife, or person in training to become such a practitioner or midwife.

"This surgery is often performed on girls with normal anatomy, who choose to undergo the procedure based on a false understanding or fear that something is wrong with the way they look. It is unacceptable for medical professions to support this type of body shaming and perform an irreversible operation on a child." – Jaha Dukureh, Safe Hands for Girls. [www.change.org](http://www.change.org), 5/26/16.

***The infliction of a wound, not the extent of the wounding, is the human rights violation.***

**NOCIRC of Colorado** honored our request to retire the NOCIRC name and has fully incorporated with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization with the name **Colorado Advocates for Body Integrity and Children's Rights (Colorado ABC)**. Congratulations, Colorado Intactivists!





**American Circumcision.**  
Brendon Marotta. <http://circumcisionmovie.com/>.

**A Woman's Guide to Men's Foreskins.** Paul Joannides. 7-minute video. <https://youtu.be/w86iZEEZiCFY>. 7/24/16.



**Body Integrity Poster**, created by Tim Hammond and James Loewen in 1998. A few remaining posters are now available. For information and purchase: <http://circumcisionharm.org/posterorder.htm>.

**Born Both: An Intersex Life.** Hida Vilorio. Hatchette Books. ISBN-10: 0316347841; ISBN-13: 978-0316347846. 3/14/17.

**Health Equals World Health: Why Birth Matters.** Alyce-Anne Meadows and Susan Highsmith. [www.thefoundationforlivingmedicine.org/why\\_birth\\_matters\\_position\\_paper](http://www.thefoundationforlivingmedicine.org/why_birth_matters_position_paper), 3/20/16.

**On the Clitoris.** Paul Joannides. <https://youtu.be/YMgl41MpKFc>. 7/30/16.



## Support Us When You Shop.



**CafePress.com** has a shop where you can purchase GA-America-branded products, including T-shirts, baby and toddler items, mugs, jewelry, magnets, buttons, keychains, teddy bears, totes, and lots more. GA-America will receive a portion of each sale. [www.cafepress.com/gaa](http://www.cafepress.com/gaa)

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**Amazon** will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to Genital Autonomy - America every time you shop. Just bookmark the link [<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0105441>]<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0105441>. Thank you!

## Announcements

### 2017 Genital Integrity Awareness Week

24th Annual Demonstration & March  
Against Infant Circumcision  
US Capitol, March 27 - April 2, 2017  
See [www.sicsociety.org](http://www.sicsociety.org) for details.

### Worldwide Day of Genital Autonomy

May 7th, 2017  
The 5th anniversary of the  
"Cologne Ruling"  
granting boys the right to  
self-determination  
will be celebrated around the world.

### GA-America Calls People to Assist:

**Communications and Social Media Coordinator:** To assist with any of the following tasks: website blog, Facebook and Twitter updates, and email alerts to GA-A supporters.

**Media Task Force members:** To assist with a program of educational outreach to the US media on genital autonomy issues

**Religious Task Force members:** To assist with a program of educational outreach to US religious denominations on genital autonomy issues.

**Intersex Allies:** To assist the GA-A Advisory Board and be available to occasionally speak from firsthand experience about IGM with members of the media.

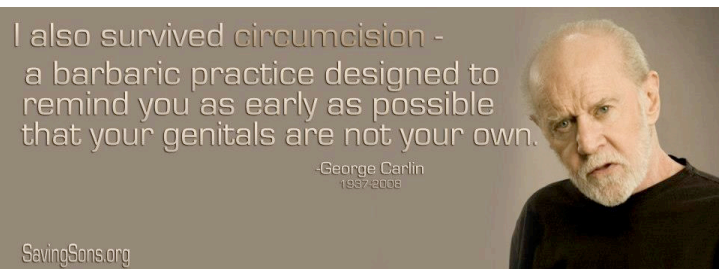
**FGM Allies:** To assist the GA-A Advisory Board and be available to occasionally speak from firsthand experience about FGM with members of the media.

**Testimonials from Survivors of MGM, FGM and IGM:** For publication on the new GA-A website.

**Fundraising Team:** To assist in implementation of planned fundraising projects.

GA-A also welcomes readers who are current members of Amnesty International or the ACLU to coordinate a genital autonomy outreach to these organizations based on recent UN developments.

Individuals interested in learning more about these assistance opportunities, please contact Tim Hammond: [thammond@gaamerica.org](mailto:thammond@gaamerica.org).



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7 May 2018

**Worldwide Day of Genital Autonomy**

Demonstration: 10am - 2pm  
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For more information about this symposium  
and demonstration see:  
[www.GenitalAutonomy.org/events](http://www.GenitalAutonomy.org/events)

**Genital Autonomy – America** (GA–America) is an educational and advocacy organization working to promote the rights of all infants and children to bodily integrity and genital autonomy without regard to sex, gender, culture, or religion.

**Our Vision** is a future that recognizes, respects, and advocates for the birthright of all infants and children—male, female, and intersex—to keep their bodies intact.

**Our Mission** is (1) to promote and preserve the health and wellbeing of all infants and children by educating and advocating to protect them from medically unnecessary genital cutting and other irreversible alterations of their sexual characteristics and development and (2) to promote the rights of all infants and children to bodily integrity and protection from harmful traditional practices by advancing public and professional awareness of the human rights of children and to encourage others to advocate for those same rights.

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