

Impact of Female Genital Cutting on the Psychosexual Health of an Egyptian Women Sample

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Date received: 19/7/2010

Date accepted: 12/10/2010

Background: The bulk of research undertaken to date has mainly focused on the health consequences on Female Genital Cutting (FGC) but not on the various psychological effects or the expected sexual changes that are likely to occur with FGC.

Objectives: The present study aims at finding out if there are differences in the psychological and sexual aspects between circumcised and uncircumcised women.

Subjects & Methods: The study was done at Mansoura University Hospitals. It included 50 circumcised and 25 uncircumcised women were with upper age limit 45 years. Both groups were screened for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder (ASD) and sexual disorders by a clinical psychiatric interview based on DSM IV-TR criteria for diagnosis. The two groups further subjected to: 1- Fahmy and Sherbeni scale to assess socioeconomic standard. 2- Beck depression inventory (BDI) for depressive symptoms and its severity. 3- Machover's test for personality assessment. 4- Middlesex Hospital questionnaire (MHQ) for neurotic manifestations. 5- Psychological general well being schedule (PGWB) for quality of life. Also, Male

interview administered to husbands of a sub-sample of women.

Results: 72% of the circumcised compared to 40% of the uncircumcised group had depression with varying degrees of severity with statistically significant difference. Many of variables showed difference between the two groups of circumcised and uncircumcised women. Although the incidence of PTSD and sexual disorders were more common among circumcised than uncircumcised women, however the differences didn't show statistical significance. ASD was found in the majority of circumcised women (88%) due to circumcision. More circumcised women show phobia, anxiety and somatization more than uncircumcised. However, more of uncircumcised women felt feminine features, narcissism and sexual preoccupation in their body image. There was statistically significant difference between the two groups with better feelings and satisfaction with their sexual relations among the uncircumcised group.

Conclusion: The study had shown that uncircumcised women are in better psychosexual health than circumcised women.

Keywords: Female Genital Cutting, Female circumcision, Sexual, Psychological consequences.

Abbreviations:

FGC: Female Genital Cutting

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

ASD: Acute Stress Disorder

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

DSM IV-TR: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorder, 4th edition, Text, Revised

PGWB: Psychological General Wellbeing scale

BDI: Beck Depression Inventory

MHQ: Middlesex Hospital Questionnaire

WHO: World Health Organization

Egypt. J. Psychiatry. Jan 2011; 32(1): 63-71

INTRODUCTION

Female genital cutting (FGC) which is also known as female circumcision, or female genital mutilation (FGM), is a common practice in many societies in Egypt and Yemen as well as in the northern half of sub-Saharan Africa. The prevalence of FGC in the countries of northeastern Africa (Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Northern Sudan) ranges from 80% to 97% (Affi, 2009). Despite the highly significant decline in the incidence of FGC during the last 20 years in many African countries (Snow, et al. 2002), Egypt still maintains its very high prevalence of FGC (El-zanaty

and Way, 2001 and Stanley, et al. 2004). In Egypt, there is a comprehensive strategy led by very enthusiastic employees of the National Council for childhood and motherhood with support of Unicef (Molleman and Franse, 2009). Women may have traumatic sequelae related to their circumcision and also related to its socio-cultural family and marriage. This suffering is compounded when the woman has lived marriage forced and she lives in a climate of violence and abuse, sexual relations are imposed (Elnashar and Abdelhady, 2007).