

# KNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPTANCE ON FEMALE CIRCUMCISSION

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**Introduction:** WHO defines Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical purposes. In Malaysia, female circumcision involved drawing a drop of blood and causing brief pain by nicking of the tip of the clitoris or prepuce with a pen-knife or sharp tools (1).

**Objective:** To assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of female circumcision in urban city Malaysia.

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study using convenience sampling where patients aged > 18 years old in the Obstetrics & Gynecology department of Hospital Ampang were included. Information gathered using guided questionnaires.

**Results:** A total of 500 respondents participate in the survey. 83.6% (418/500) respondents knew regarding circumcision. Among those who knew, 83% (347/418) knew from family members. 81.6% (341/418) of the respondents thought circumcision was performed mainly due to religious grounds of which 93.7% (392/418) were Muslims. 52.8 % (207/392) thought it was obligatory to perform circumcision. The perceived benefits of female circumcision include cleanliness in 60.7% (238/392) and control of sexual desire 28.3% (111/392). In assessing their attitude towards female circumcision, 87.8% (344/392) of the mothers had themselves been circumcised when young. 94.4% (370/392) feel that circumcision had no complications. When asked regarding will they circumcised their daughter, 97% (380/392) said they will. 72% of the respondents state that they do not know how the circumcision is being performed. Age of preference for female circumcision is between 0-6 months among 79% (309/392) of the respondents. Medical doctor is the preferred personnel to do the circumcision (73% of the respondents).

**Discussion:** Family plays a vital role in providing information. Although majority performed circumcision based on religious grounds, there is no exact statement in the Quran to validate such practice. Cultural influence may play a role on why and how circumcision is performed as the practice varies with different communities and countries. Interestingly, medical doctor is the preferred personnel to do circumcision although they may not have received formal training. Despite agreement in performing circumcision only few mothers knew how exactly it is being performed.

**Conclusion:** Female circumcision is widely accepted among Malaysian population. The practice involves a minor procedure and may not be regarded as genital mutilation.

## References:

AK Rashid. The Practice Of Female Genital Mutilation Among The Rural Malays In North Malaysia. The Internet Journal of Third World Medicine. 2010.