



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Health Care Professionals



Course Completion Requirements

- Participant must register for the course on A-TRAIN
- Participant must attend the entire session
- Participant must complete a course evaluation within two weeks of course completion
- Participants who fail to complete the evaluation within two weeks will be withdrawn from the course and nursing contact hours will not be awarded

Disclosures

- The planning committee & faculty attest that NO relevant financial, professional or personal conflict of interest exists, nor was sponsorship of commercial support obtained in the preparation or presentation of this educational activity
- The Arkansas Department of Health is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Midwest Multistate Division, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation



Learning Outcome

- Participant will self-report an increase in knowledge regarding FGM and any civil cause of action related to violation of Act 556 of 2019

Why do we need to know about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

- Arkansas Act 556 of 2019 was established to prohibit unlawful FGM of a minor
- Since this Act is now law in Arkansas, it is important to educate clinical providers and others regarding information contained in the Act, as well as to provide education to increase awareness about FGM

Is FGM really a problem?

- Worldwide it is estimated that over 200 million girls and women are living with the effects of FGM. Of these, approximately 44 million are less than age 15. (8)
- In the United States, it is estimated that more than 513,000 girls and women have experienced or are at risk of FGM. (1,2)

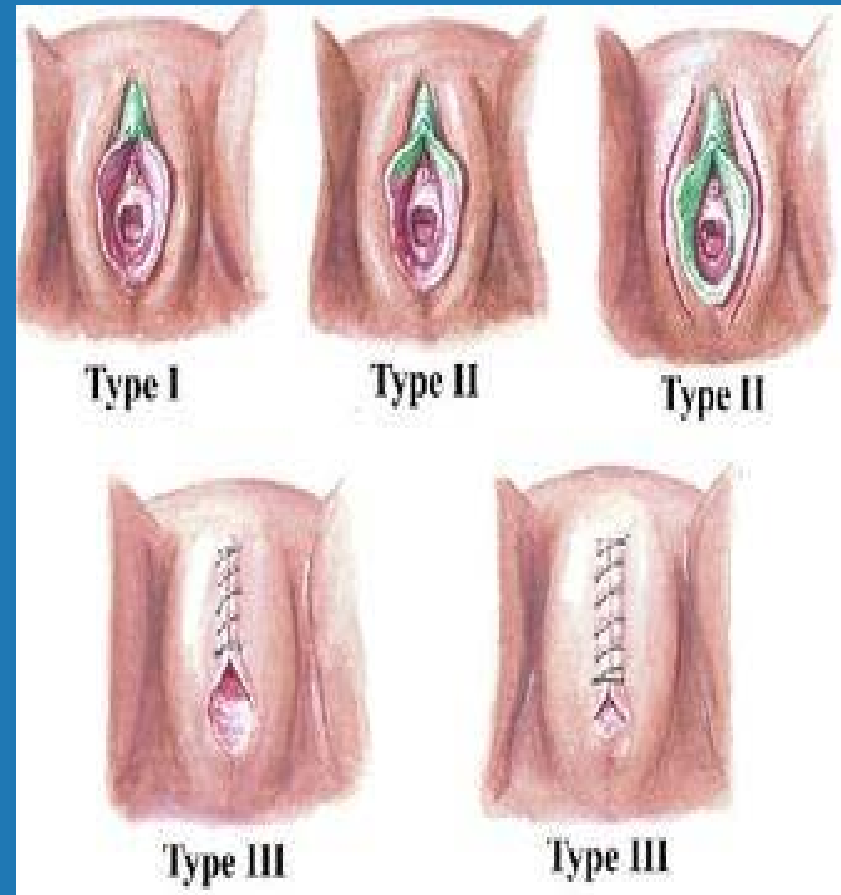


So what is FGM?

- Female genital mutilation (FGM), sometimes called “female cutting” or “female circumcision”, is described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as comprising “all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitals, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”
 - NOTE: Although sometimes called “female circumcision.” FGM is **not** the same as male circumcision.
- The United States also uses this definition in its efforts to end the practice

World Health Organization (WHO) Classification of FGM

- Type I – Clitoridectomy
 - Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce
- Type II – Excision
 - Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the inner labia, with or without excision of the outer labia
- Type III – Infibulation
 - Narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a covering seal
- Type IV – Other
 - All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g.: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing (burning) the genital area



Health Benefits of FGM

- The practice has **NO** health benefits and can lead to a range of physical and mental health problems.

What are the Health Effects of FGM?

Immediate health problems may include:

- Blood loss, hemorrhage
- Severe pain and shock
- Injury to adjacent tissue
- Urine retention
- Death
- Infection

What are the Health Effects of FGM?

Long-term health problems may include:

- Urinary infections
- Difficulty urinating
- Incontinence
- Fistula
- Infertility
- Painful menstruation or sexual intercourse
- Negative psychological effects: fear, embarrassment, trauma
- Chronic pelvic infections
- Sexual dysfunction
- Cysts and abscesses
- Potential increase in the risk of HIV/ AIDS infection, tetanus or other infectious disease
- Complications during childbirth
- Death

How does FGM affect pregnancy?

FGM does not usually cause problems for a woman during pregnancy, but women who have been cut face unique health risks during childbirth. These include:

- Prolonged labor
- Excessive bleeding after childbirth
- Higher risk for episiotomy during childbirth. There is also a higher risk that this flesh will tear on its own during birth. These risks are especially high for women who have had type 3 FGM
- Higher risk for cesarean section (C-section)
- Risks to the infant include low birth weight (smaller than 5½ pounds at birth), breathing problems at birth, and stillbirth or early death

ACOG Statement

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists condemns the practice of FGM and supports all efforts to eliminate the practice of FGM in the U.S. as well as internationally. This position is aligned with those of the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. (4)



Reasons for Performing FGM

- Respect for Tradition
 - Part of the history and cultural tradition of the community.
- Rite of Passage
 - A sign of girls entering into adulthood/womanhood
- Enhance Fertility
 - Woman may not be able to become pregnant or have difficult labor without the procedure
- Increases Marriageability
 - Men are expected to marry only women who have undergone FGM

Reasons for Performing FGM

- Ensures Virginity
 - Protects the girl's honor, as well as that of her family
- Cleanliness and Beauty
 - Female genitals that are cut/closed are sometimes considered more hygienic and beautiful
- Femininity
 - Removal of parts that are considered masculine (clitoris)
- Religious Reasons
 - Religious leaders promote the practice



Who performs the procedure?

- Traditional circumcisers/cutters
 - Perform up to 95% of FGM
 - Are mostly women who play other roles in the community such as attending childbirths
 - Often do not have any medical training
- Other Providers
 - The remaining 5% of people who perform this procedure is made up of medical professionals (often called “medicalization” of FGM) such as midwives, nurses, or doctors.
 - Can be performed in the home or a private clinic

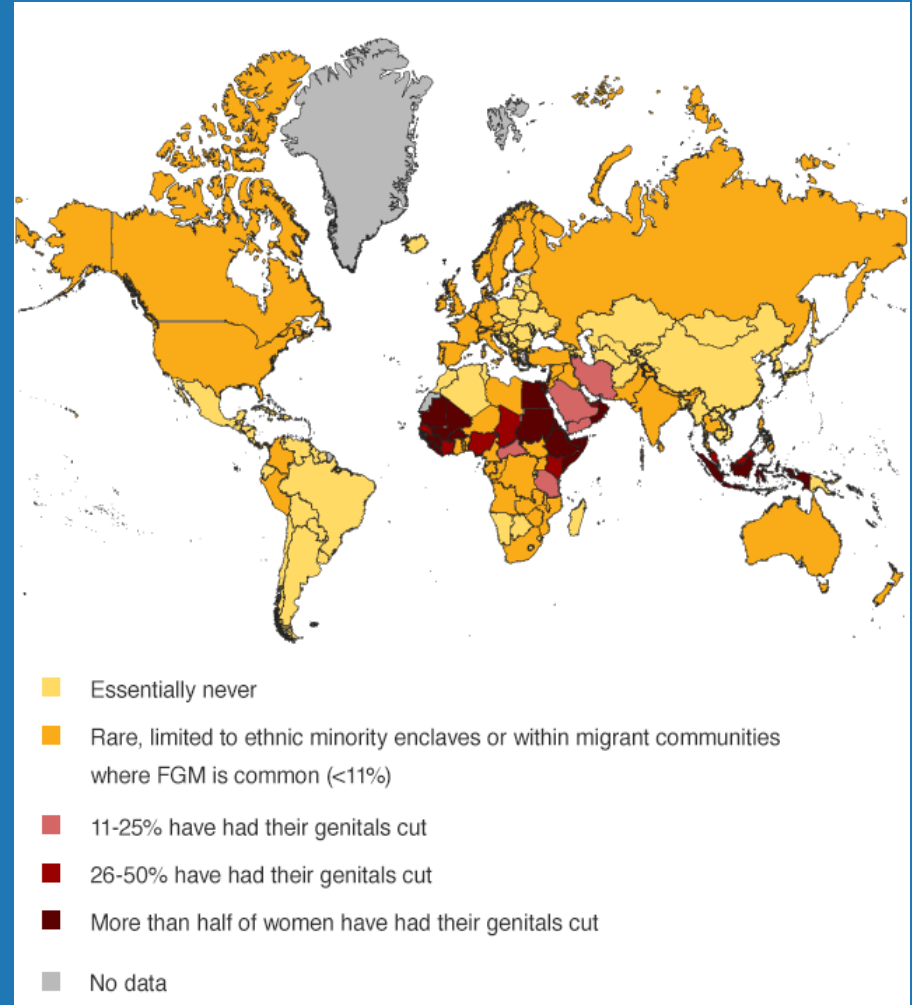


Who is at risk?

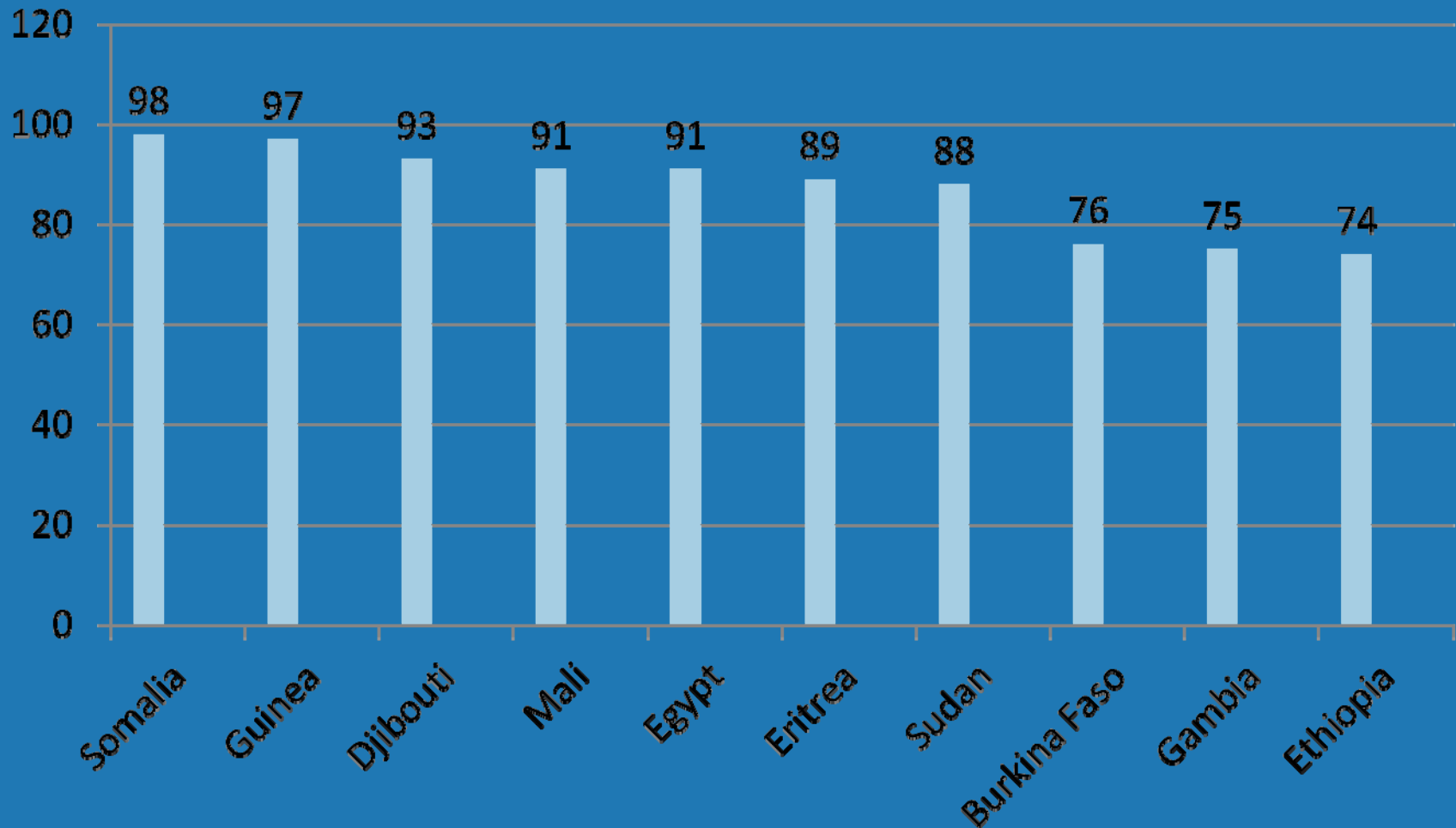
- FGM is most often carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15, and occasionally on adult women
- Girls and women most at risk of FGM in the United States are those born to families that have emigrated from countries where FGM is practiced (3)
 - Women may arrive in the U.S. having already had the procedure performed, but there are reports of these procedures being performed in immigrant populations by traditional practitioners, or girls being sent to the family's home country to have the procedures performed

What countries practice FGM?

- Although FGM is more commonly performed in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, there are reports of these procedures being performed in immigrant populations in the U.S. by traditional practitioners



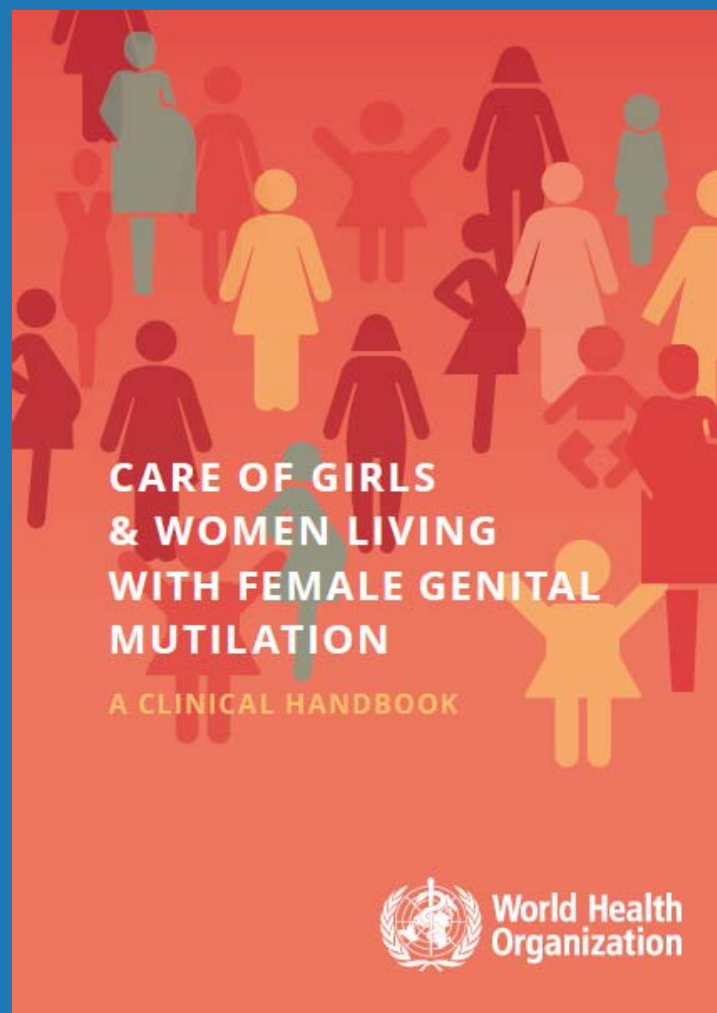
Top Ten Countries for FGM



What are some signs one may notice?

- Spend more time in bathroom or toilet
- Unusual behavior after an absence from school or college
- Unexpected, repeated or prolonged absence from school
- Academic work suffering
- Difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- Particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Ask for help but may not be explicit about problem due to embarrassment or fear
- A family arranging a long break abroad during summer holidays

Resource for Providers



**CARE OF GIRLS
& WOMEN LIVING
WITH FEMALE GENITAL
MUTILATION**

A CLINICAL HANDBOOK



World Health
Organization



Is FGM against the law?

- **YES:**
- FGM is against the law in the United States, and the US and many other countries consider FGM a violation of women's rights and a form of child abuse.
- Federal law makes it a crime to perform FGM on a girl younger than 18 or to take or attempt to take a girl out of the United States for FGM
- Female Genital Mutilation is added as a definition of abuse under the Child Maltreatment Act, Arkansas Code § 12-18-103(3)(A) (6)
- In Arkansas, Act 556 of 2019 was enacted to prohibit unlawful female genital mutilation of a minor and to provide for civil cause of action

Girls and women who have experienced FGM are not at fault and have not broken any U.S. laws



What if the parent gives consent?

- It is still against the law if:
 - The parent consents
 - Done for religious purposes
 - It is the custom or ritual in the individual's home country
 - Done for a nonmedical reason

Criminal Penalties

- The criminal offense of unlawful female genital mutilation of a minor is a Class C felony--See Ark. Code Ann. § 5-14-135(c) (6)
- The criminal penalties for committing this offense include serving a prison sentence of not less than three (3) years nor more than ten (10) years, and paying a fine up to \$10,000 and any restitution

States with Laws Criminalizing FGM



<http://endfgmtoday.com/fgm-in-america/fgm-in-each-state/>

What should I do?

- Cases of suspected maltreatment **must** be reported to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at 1- 800-482-5964 for investigation
- Other helpful numbers
 - Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section of the Department of Justice at 1-800-813-5863 or hrrtips@usdoj.gov (5)
 - Human Rights Violator and War Crimes Unit of the Department of Homeland Security at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423) or HRV.ICE@ice.dhs.gov (5)
 - National Child Abuse Hotline 24/7 at 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453)



Questions?



Sources:

- 1. Goldberg H, Stupp P, Okoroh E, Besera G, Goodman D, Danel I. Female genital mutilation/cutting in the United States: updated estimates of women and girls at risk, 2012. Public Health Rep 2016;131:340-7. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4765983/pdf/phr131000340.pdf>. Retrieved March 29, 2019
- 2. Office on Women's Health. Female genital mutilation or cutting. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018. Available at: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/female-genital-cutting>. Retrieved March 29, 2019
- 3. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting United States Government's Response; Available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/female-genital-mutilation-factsheet.html>. Retrieved May 13, 2019
- 4. ACOG College Statement of Policy FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION. Available at: <https://www.acog.org/-/media/Statements-of-Policy/Public/98FemaleGenitalMutilation-March2019.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20190513T1624461655>. Retrieved May 13, 2019
- 5. U.S Department of Health and Human Services; Office on Women's Health; available at <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/female-genital-cutting> Retrieved July 17, 2019
- 6. Act 556 to Prohibit Unlawful Female Genital Mutilation of a Minor <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2019/2019R/Acts/Act556.pdf>
- 7. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/signs-symptoms-and-effects/> Retrieved May 13, 2019
- 8. Care of women and girls living with female genital mutilation: a clinical handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
- 9. Equality Now: A just world for women and girls. US Laws Against FGM – State by State https://www.equalitynow.org/us_laws_against_fgm_state_by_state