Seattle March to Medical Supplier

SEATTLE, November 11 – Activists marched behind the NOHARMM banner to Olympic Medical, manufacturer of the Circumstraint, advertised as the circumcision board that “can immobilize the struggling infant securely in the correct position...encircle the infant’s elbows and knees, depriving him of leverage and [holding him] securely without danger of escape.”

Out front, demonstrators placed flowers on a Circumstraint while NOHARMM Director Tim Hammond played a recording of the screams of a baby being circumcised for the employees inside. Nurses offered the flowers to Olympic Medical administrators in remembrance of the countless babies who have been made to suffer and whose lives have been forever altered while strapped to an Olympic Circumstraint, but the company’s spokesperson told the nurses they were trespassing and asked them to leave. In keeping with the theme of the message, the demonstration ended peacefully, as it had begun.
It has been an incredible decade, these ten years since I was fired from Marin General Hospital for telling the truth and founded NOCIRC to keep on telling it.

Hospital officials told me not to talk to patients about circumcision because I was upsetting them. “The baby is a patient,” I said, “and no one is more upset by circumcision than he is.” My husband said, “When they told Marilyn to keep quiet, they told the wrong person.”

I didn’t start out as an activist. I was just giving parents the information I wish someone had given me, knowing that parents have a right and an obligation to know what circumcision is, what would actually be done to their baby, how the baby reacts, and the consequences. I told parents what I had learned about this operation that I had consented to for my own three sons, an operation I now knew harmed the baby.

The intensely emotional responses of parents to the information I gave them stunned me. One young mother held her newborn baby close and wept as she watched a baby being circumcised on the videotape Sheila Curran and I had made. She thanked me for saving her baby from that experience. When some mothers who consented to circumcision blamed me for making them feel guilty because I had told them the truth, I was fired.

Sheila and I called our videotape Informed Consent because we thought that if parents were informed about circumcision, they would refuse to consent. When we saw that some parents consented regardless of the information they were given or what their son would endure, we realized that circumcision was not an issue of “informed consent,” but an issue of human rights.

I’ve since learned that some people would rather “kill the messenger” than hear the message. Our message tells a man that, despite his protests, a normal, sensitive, functional part of his penis was cut off; it tells a mother that, despite his protests, a normal, sensitive, functional part of her baby was cut off a healthy, normal, sensitive, functional part of their babies’ body – a quarter-billion-dollar-a-year racket and, in the words of John A. Erickson, the ugliest, saddest, most sickening scandal in the history of medicine.

Please join us in this important march and rally and help us tell the American medical community that we are holding it accountable for this horrendous fraud, that it is the inviolable birthright of all human beings to keep their genitals intact, that no one has the right to cut off a baby’s foreskin, and that the genital altering of baby boys in this country must stop.

Marilyn Miles

“History will not remember kindly those who advocate circumcision, and will include them with the 19th and early 20th century advocates and practitioners of leeching, trepanning, clitoridectomy, and castration. The rationalizations doctors in the U.S. continue to invent for forcing circumcision on innocent boys are little more than puritanical, Victorian, anti-sexualist prudery hiding behind the mask of science.” From letter by medical historian Frederick Hodges to Edgar J. Schoen, M.D., Chairman, 1989 American Academy of Pediatrics Ad Hoc Task Force on Circumcision, 1 December 1994.
AFRICA
Harare, Zimbabwe: In a case with racial overtones, a white Zimbabwean doctor was sentenced to 12 months in prison, with six months suspended, for being “grossly negligent.” Two children died from overdoses of morphine, one a 20-month-old boy after he was circumcised. Anesthesiologist Dr. Richard McGown, 58, served only one day in jail before he was released January 27 because his case was on appeal to the Supreme Court. Associated Press

AUSTRALIA
Sydney: Researchers at Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Sydney Hospital, found that “circumcision of men has no significant effect on the incidence of common STDs in this developed nation setting.” Genitourinary Medicine 1994;70:317-320.

CANADA
British Columbia: Resolution B-5, an objection to routine newborn male circumcision, was introduced for consideration to the 1994 annual meeting of registered nurses in British Columbia. The resolution was struck from the floor before voting delegates could even discuss it. [Is this subject so taboo that nurses are afraid to talk about it?]

Prince George: A 21-day-old baby boy developed Methaemoglobinaemia, which can cause brain damage and death in small infants, within a few hours after being circumcised with Prilocaine as a local anesthetic. The Department of Paediatrics at Prince George Regional Hospital now recommends that no infants under the age of three months get Prilocaine or EMLA cream, which contains 2.5% Prilocaine, in any form because of this serious risk. Canadian Nurse, August 1994.

Toronto: At the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, researchers found that male babies who had been circumcised showed a greater response to pain when routinely vaccinated (at 4 or 6 months) than female babies or male babies who had not been circumcised. “We do know from adults that we are conditioned for pain, and the infant’s pain conditioning may well linger into later life,” said researcher Dr. Gideon Koren. Researchers looked at both cultural background and maternal intervention, and found no explanation other than circumcision for the different reactions from the babies. Lancet 1994;344:291-92

EGYPT
Cairo: Egyptian hosts of the U.N. Population Conference in Cairo, which included female genital mutilation as part of its official agenda, were angered when Cable News Network International showed the mutilation of a 10-year-old girl. CNN’s shocking footage was followed by the Egyptian press’ attempt to denounce the tape as a betrayal of Cairo’s gracious hospitality. Several thousand Egyptian girls are circumcised daily by “hygienic barbers.” Some 80% of Egyptian women have undergone the mutilation, which serves no purpose beyond depriving females of sexual pleasure. Many Egyptian men believe this condition ensures their fidelity. Egyptian authorities arrested the father and the barber and plumber who performed the surgery, who now face charges of sexual abuse and practicing medicine without a license. Associated Press, September 1994.

Cairo: After President Hosni Mubarak promised to introduce legislation to prohibit female genital mutilation, health minister Dr. Ali Abdul Fatah Omaar declared: “We have no plans to ban this operation by introducing legislation, but we are looking at ways for it to be carried out by qualified doctors and under proper medical supervision.” British Medical Journal, 7 January 1995.

UNITED STATES
Dr. Nahid Touba discussed female genital mutilation in the New England Journal of Medicine (“Female Circumcision as a Public Health Issue,” September 15, 1994) and International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics, (“Female genital mutilation and the responsibility of reproductive health professionals,” 1994). In the latter, she upholds the rights of children without gender bias: “The unnecessary removal of a functioning body organ in the name of tradition, custom, or any other non-disease-related cause should never be acceptable to the health profession. All childhood circumcisions are violations of human rights and a breach of the fundamental code of medical ethics.”

Washington, D.C.: The National Center for Health Statistics reports the continued decline in the U.S. circumcision rate, which for 1993 is 59.5% nationwide and 35.5% in the West. [The West has been won!]

St. Paul, MN: A five-hour operation at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center last July turned a Russian child born with “mixed gonadal dysgenesis” (the genitals of both sexes) into a “girl.” Blood tests showed that the child had both male and female chromosomes. Dr. Yuri Reimberg and his colleagues decided that the child should be changed into a girl because the operation is technically less complicated and the results are “better” for the patient. According to Intersex Society of North America Director, Cheryl Chase, the surgery has devastating consequences that deny the person a full sexual life. For more information: Intersex Society of North America, P.O. Box 31791, San Francisco, CA 94131.

Washington, D.C.: The National Center for Health Statistics reports the continued decline in the U.S. circumcision rate, which for 1993 is 59.5% nationwide and 35.5% in the West. (The West has been won!)

NOCIRC NEWSLETTER
SIMPSON 1995

Norwegian center for health statistics
News From Our Affiliates

NEWS FROM NOHARMM

Video Interviews Complete for Men Began to Scream, a 30-minute documentary exploring the men’s movement against routine genital mutilation, which now needs $15,000 for editing and distribution. Please send your tax-deductible donations to NOHARMM, P.O. Box 460795, San Francisco, CA 94146-0795.

Protest at Kaiser On February 15, outside Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Oakland, CA, NOHARMMers protested Dr. Edgar Schoen’s lunch-hour presentation, “Newborn Circumcision.” During the question-and-answer session, activists inside challenged Schoen's pro-circumcision message by testifying to long-term circumcision harm and distributing medical literature opposing circumcision to doctors and nurses, several of whom thanked the activists for being there.

Intact Subgroup Formed An informal network to support and address concerns of intact men. Al Fields, NOHARMM/Philadelphia, 610-489-6505.

Planned Actions


May 8-10, San Francisco, CA: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Annual Meeting. Rally and leafleting to draw attention to the inconsistency between ACOG’s recent stand against female genital mutilation and its continued condoning of male genital mutilation. Tim Hammond, 415-826-9351.


July 27-29, Northern CA: San Francisco Bay Area Film Premiere of Barry Ellsworth’s The Nurses of St. Vincent: Saying “No” to Circumcision (Thursday, July 27), strategy meeting-reunion-picnic (Friday), and march to and rally at Marin General Hospital to commemorate tenth anniversary of nurse Marilyn Milos’ forced resignation (Saturday). The weekend kicks off a national awareness campaign. Volunteers and donations needed. Tim Hammond, 415-826-9351, or Marilyn Milos, 415-488-9883. Send SASE for forthcoming info packet.

NEWS FROM NORM

The National Organization of Restoring Men, honoring men who acknowledge the harm done to them and who are in the process of healing, celebrated its fifth anniversary on February 5 in San Francisco with guest speakers Jim Bigelow and Marilyn Milos. New NORM groups have formed in New Zealand and Montreal. Contact Wayne Griffiths for information and the group nearest you. NORM, 3205 Northwood Drive, Suite 209, Concord, CA 94520, 510-827-4077, fax 510-827-4119.

NEWS FROM UNCIRC

The second edition of The Joy of Uncircumcising!, by Jim Bigelow, Ph.D., is hot off the press! Revised, expanded, updated. 90 new references. This scholarly, definitive work has been reviewed in six scientific journals. See “Bulletin” for ordering information.

Letters To The Editor

Respect: Anti-circumcision efforts like yours are very important because they promote respect for the dignity of the human body and the human spirit. Flagrant violations of human rights such as non-consensual neonatal circumcision validate a disrespect for the right of every individual to lead a peaceful and unmolested life. J.K., CA

Foreskin Advertisement: I just had to send you the enclosed ad I saw in my son’s September sNoBOARD Magazine. You are, after all, responsible for the foreskin he now enjoys! Thanks again! M.R., ID [The ad, paid for by an insurance company, shows a naked baby sitting on a snowboard and says, “Have you seen your foreskin lately? Even if you weren’t circumcised, you could still lose it on the slopes.”]

Circumcision Compulsion: A comment at the symposium implied that someday routine newborn circumcision would be gone. It won’t. There’s something deep in the human subconscious operating here that prompts people to circumcise. How else can we explain its long history and its wide distribution across many societies? The ancients said the gods demanded it. We moderns say the exigencies of medicine require it. Its existence is best explained by psychology rather than searching the heavens or looking to medicine. We must oppose it because it is a dehumanizing act that alters another person’s body without his permission. But we will oppose it knowing that it can never be completely abolished. J.R., Ph.D., CA

Choice: We are working to provide information as the basis of real choice to our nurse-midwifery students, often using circumcision information as an example of what should be provided when any procedure or surgery is suggested. Our African-American grandmothers present a challenge, but most are quite religious. Light dawns when we point out that our Creator gives baby boys a foreskin as tight as the skin on our fingers for a very important reason – protection! They are impressed when presented with the question: “Who does man think he is, deciding that the Creator goofed and now he [man] has to fix it?” B.H., CNM, NJ

Rhyme and Reason: “Foreskin! More rhyme and reason: They are impressed when presented with the question: “Who does man think he is, deciding that the Creator goofed and now he [man] has to fix it?” B.H., CNM, NJ

New Year Wish: May your 1995 campaign be bold and bring the end to circumcision! B.B., WA

Your financial support keeps NOCIRC alive and able to continue its efforts to safeguard the genital integrity and human rights of children. Your Spring donation is needed to help make our July event a success. Thank you!
NEW!
Cumulative Index Medicus of Genital Mutilation, by Frederick Hodges. Bibliography of articles on genital mutilation, 1600s to present. 375 pages. Continuously updated. $60 ppd. Frederick Hodges, P.O. Box 5456, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Cutting The Rose, Female Genital Mutilation: The Practice and Its Prevention, by Efua Dorkenoo. $15.95/$24.95. Minority Rights Publications, 379 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE.

Mothers Know Best, scheduled for May 1, is a new publication to give mothers the inspiration and courage to trust their natural instincts. For subscription information, write to Mothers Know Best, 4 Wallace Road, London N1 2PG.


The Psychology of Circumcision, by Ronald Goldman, M.A. $17.95 plus $2 S/H. Circumcision Resource Center, Dept. N, P.O. Box 232, Boston, MA 02133.

1994 NOHARMM Street Actions, by Barry Ellsworth. 30-min. videotape. Includes rallies at Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (Wash., DC, May 1994) and Olympic Medical Corp. (Seattle, WA, Nov. 1994). $29 (NY State residents add 8.25% sales tax). Fireball Films, Dept. N, P.O. Box 107, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003.

The following videotapes are available from Evans Industries, Dept. N, 3750 W. Goret Road, Tucson, AZ, 85745, 520-743-9933. Send SASE for details.

Making the Circumcision Decision, 50-minute video for parents. $24.95 plus $7 S/H.

Sensual Pleasure Lost & Found, 45-minute video about the physical and emotional benefits of foreskin restoration. $49.95 plus $7 S/H.

The Video Guide to The Joy of Uncircumcision! 70-minute video detailing the techniques of foreskin restoration illustrated in Jim Bigelow’s book. (Contains male nudity.) $49.95 plus $7 S/H.

BOOKS & BOOKLETS
Awakenings: Preliminary Poll of Circumcised Men (Revealing the Long-Term Harm and Healing the Wounds of Infant Circumcision). $25 ppd. NOHARMM, Dept. N, P.O. Box 460795, San Francisco, CA 94146.


Les musulmans face aux droits de l’homme: religion & droit & politique, etude et documents, by Sami A. Aldeeb. 610 pages. Dr. Dieter Winkler, P.O. Box 102665, D-44726 Bochum, Germany.

Proceedings from the Second International Symposium on Circumcision, Volume 1, edited by Marilyn Milos, R.N., Leslie Richter and Frederick Hodges. $10 ppd. NOCIRC.

Say No to Circumcision! 40 Compelling Reasons Why You Should Respect His Body and Keep Your Son Whole, by Thomas Ritter, M.D. $10.95 plus $2 S/H ($0.95 sales tax in CA). NOCIRC.

The Joy of Being a Boy, by Elizabeth Noble with Leo Sorger, M.D. To reassure the young boy and his family that a natural penis is normal & to teach the boy how to care for himself. $4.95 ppd. New Life Images, 448 Pleasant Lake Ave., Harwich, MA 02645 (508-432-8040).

To Mutilate in the Name of Jehovah or Allah: Legitimization of Male and Female Circumcision, by Sami A. Aldeeb. $8 ppd. NOHARMM, Dept. N, P.O. Box 460795, San Francisco, CA 94146.

PAMPHLETS, NEWSLETTERS & MORE
Answers to Your Questions About Circumcision, Educational pamphlet. Two copies/$1 and SASE. NOCIRC.

Answers to Your Questions About Your Young Son’s Intact Penis. Educational pamphlet (revised). Two copies/$1 and SASE. NOCIRC.

BORN Magazine, $12/year. Birth Oriented Resource Network, P.O. Box 103, Huntington Valley, PA 19006-0103.

Circumcision: Sources of Information. Pamphlet. Free for SASE. John A. Erickson, 1664 Beach Blvd. #216, Biloxi, MS 34531.

The Compleat Mother: The Magazine of Pregnancy, Birth and Breastfeeding, $12/year. Bulk subscriptions available. The Compleat Mother, P.O. Box 209, Minot, ND 58702.

Female Genital Mutilation: Sources of Information. Pamphlet. Free for SASE. John A. Erickson, 1664 Beach Blvd. #216, Biloxi, MS 39531.

Non-Ritual Circumcision: A Piece of Skin the Size of a Quarter: Photographs of the Intact Adult Male Foreskin, by John A. Erickson. Exhibited at the 3ISC. (Photographs that show exactly what we are trying to protect.) 33 - 4”x 6” color reprints. $30 ppd. John A. Erickson, Dept. N, 1664 Beach Blvd. #216, Biloxi, MS 34531.


The Nurses of St. Vincent: Saying “No” To Circumcision, by Barry Ellsworth. Video profile of conscientious objector nurses who refused to assist in neonatal circumcision at St. Vincent Hospital, Santa Fe, New Mexico. 18 minutes. On the same tape: NOHARMM Rally at the CMA (12 minutes). $25 plus $4 S/H. (NY residents add 8.25% sales tax.) Fireball Films, Ltd., P.O. Box 107, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003.


Videotapes of the Third International Symposium on Circumcision. Almost ready. SASE brings list. John A. Erickson, 1664 Beach Blvd. #216, Biloxi, MS 39531.

CONFERENCE
Nurses of St. Vincent Make History!
Santa Fe, NM – After months of mediation, St. Vincent Hospital administrators in February agreed officially to relieve conscientious objector (C.O.) nurses of the “duties of circumcision.” As outlined in a legally binding document, Memo of Understanding, C.O. nurses are not required to: witness the consent, dispense pre-op “medication” (sugar water), prepare or stock the room, assist with the procedure (strap the baby down and stand by during the surgery) or immediate post-op care (such as stop bleeding or apply Vaseline dressing), or clean up afterwards (dispose of the foreskin).

The C.O. nurses listened politely while administrators, physicians and circumcision-assistant nurses expressed concern that the C.O. nurses were zealots who were harassing parents and spoiling birth celebrations. But the C.O. nurses stood their ground. They hope that other nurses will now feel safe about taking a stand against circumcision and that the St. Vincent Hospital policy statement will become a model for hospitals nationwide.

The Nurses of St. Vincent: Saying “No” to Circumcision
Video by Barry Ellsworth
San Francisco Bay Area Premiere
An Educational Forum Sponsored by the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers and College of Marin Student Nurse Association
Thursday, July 27, 1995, 7 pm
College of Marin, Olney Hall
Sir Francis Drake Blvd. at College Ave., Kentfield, CA
Guest speakers include the Santa Fe Nurses
For information call (415) 488-9883.