Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.)
2442 NW Market Street, Suite 42
Seattle, WA 98107

The vast majority of doctors in the U.S. do not circumcise male babies or anyone else. But the few who do have been very effective, influential and far-reaching with their misinformation.

Now, with the founding of this new non-profit organization, Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.), misinformation about circumcision will be met with the facts from other members of the same profession.

Already, the efforts of a small number of health professionals and other children’s rights advocates have helped the male infant circumcision rate in the U.S. drop from a high of 90 percent to less than 60 percent. This means that tens of millions of parents in this country have had the courage, wisdom and information they needed to keep their baby boys intact.

The efforts of children’s rights advocates to protect male babies from doctors who cut off the foreskins of babies will now have the backing of an organized group of medical doctors.

D.O.C. is committed to telling the truth about circumcision and the uniquely specialized, uniquely sensitive erogenous tissue circumcision destroys.

Some doctors may still continue to circumcise babies, but now only in full awareness of the great pain and lifelong loss of sensation and function they are forcing upon these males.

If you agree with us that all human beings have the right to keep their sexual organs intact, please consider joining D.O.C.

George C. Denniston, M.D., MPH
President

“First Do No Harm”

“...performance of this procedure – an acknowledged hazard to health – constitutes child abuse. Physicians should prevent, not abet, unhealthful practices.”


“Circumcision causes pain, trauma, and a permanent loss of protective and erogenous tissue...Removing normal, healthy, functioning tissue for no medical reason has ethical implications: circumcision violates the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 5) and the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 13).”

Leo Sorger, M.D., Ob.GYN News, November 1, 1994.

“Mother’s insurance status and race as well as surgical interventions during delivery are related to circumcision. Associations with episiotomy and cesarean section suggest physician and/or parental preference for interventional approaches to health care. Generalizing the difference in hospital length of stay to the United States suggests an annual cost between $234 million and $527 million beyond charges for the [circumcision] procedure itself.”


“It [circumcision] is an emblem of brutality of society and a lack of concern for our future children.” Carl Wood, M.D.

British Medical Journals
Report Loss and Harm


British Medical Journal, February 10, 1996: “Removal of normal foreskin is unethical,” by Dr. John P. Warren, claims that circumcision violates ethical standards and that “doctors should give greater recognition to the rights of the child.” (See page 2.)
“People will change when they see a better way.”

Chekov

Medical students in the U.S. have traditionally been taught to regard the male foreskin as just a “flap of skin,” even as abnormal, dangerous and harmful. Circumcision has been just another “procedure” they learned to perform. It has been the “standard of practice.”

It’s not surprising, then, that so many doctors who circumcise babies seem to know so little about the part of the penis they have been cutting off or how its loss affects the lives of the babies they circumcise.

A new study, a new video and a new organization deserve the attention of anyone who wants to be truly informed.


Taylor’s study shows that “Skin and mucosa sufficient to cover the penile shaft were frequently missing from the circumcised penis. Missing tissue included a band of ridged mucosa [that] contains more Meissner’s corpuscles than does the smooth mucosa and exhibits features of specialized sensory mucosa...The amount of tissue loss estimated in the present study is more than most parents envisage from pre-operative counselling. Circumcision also ablates junction mucosa that appears to be an important component of the overall sensory mechanism of the human penis...articles and editorials on the advantages and disadvantages of circumcision consistently fail to discuss the prepuce as a tissue worthy of preservation in its own right.” (For reprints, see page 5.)

Whose Body, Whose Rights?: Examining the Ethics and the Human Rights Issue of Infant Male Circumcision, a video by Lawrence Dillon and Tim Hammond, documents what few parents are ever told: that many circumcised males see themselves as harmed by circumcision. (Ordering information on page 5.)

These two documents substantiate what a growing number of doctors are now acknowledging: the protective, sensory and sexual functions of the foreskin, and the pain and psychological harm of circumcision.

Doctors who refuse – or are thinking about refusing – to circumcise babies will find support in Dr. George Denniston’s organization, Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.), which is committed to “sharing the awareness that the human penis is designed correctly the way it comes into the world, with its foreskin intact; that a male’s possession of his own penis – including his foreskin – is his inviolable birthright; and that a child’s chances for health and happiness throughout his life are greater – by far – if he is allowed to keep all of his penis.”

As more and more doctors rethink and redefine their own standard of practice about circumcision, their voices are added to this growing human rights concern. Nahid Toubia, M.D., stated it clearly: “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.” (International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, 1994)

When enough doctors put their scalpsels down and speak up in defense of infants, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists will listen. One day, these organizations, too, will acknowledge the birthright of all human beings to keep their sexual organs intact.

Thank you, Dr. Taylor! Thank you, Lawrence and Tim! Thank you, D.O.C.!

Marilyn Miles

D.O.C.’s founder, George Denniston, M.D., MPH, is the co-author of the recently published second edition of Say No To Circumcision! Forty compelling reasons why you should respect his birthright and keep your son whole. (Ordering information, page 5.)

British Medical Journal Press Release

Removal of normal foreskin is unethical

Doctors who perform circumcision on boys “amputate normal tissue from a normal child” and violate ethical standards, say the 20 signatories of a letter in this week’s BMJ [10 February 1996]. The men, who have all been circumcised themselves, argue that circumcision should not be done until the patient is an adult, or at least old enough to fully appreciate the consequences of the operation.

One survey found that only three out of 1,968 circumcision operations were medically necessary, and they believe that the rights of children embodied in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Charter for Children in Hospital are breached by the unnecessary operations.

The men who signed the letter claim that many British doctors are ignorant of the natural development of the foreskin, which continues until the age of 17, and point to a gap in the BMA’s ethical guidelines, which give no guidance to doctors on the issue. They say that doctors should give greater recognition to the rights of the child and that circumcision should be performed only in the few cases in which conservative treatment has failed. Dr. John P. Warren, NORM UK, POB 71, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 0SF, England.
AFRICA
The estimated number of mutilated women and girls for continental Africa is now 126.88 million. WIN News, 1995.

Kenya: Defying criticism from Kenya’s attorney general, Muslim legislators vowed to continue the practice of female genital mutilation. “We shall do it whether you like it or not,” said Muslim deputy Jillo Falana, as other supporters cheered or laughed. “It is a culture we inherited from time immemorial.” Quad-City Times, 1 December 1995

EGYPT
Cairo: The government has forbidden state hospitals to perform female genital mutilations, just months after authorizing them to do so in an attempt to curb botched operations by amateurs. On October 17, 1995, the Egyptian Minister of Health rescinded the directive because of pressure from women’s and human rights groups and fear of U.S. aid sanctions, according to one official. Associated Press

DENMARK
Using data from the Danish Cancer Registry, researchers found a declining incidence of penis cancer in a virtually uncircumcised population. During the period under study (1943-1990), the proportion of Danish dwellings with a bath increased gradually from 35% in 1940 to 90% in 1990. It seems plausible that better penile hygiene resulting from this improvement in sanitary installations contributed in the observed trend. British Medical Journal, 2 December 1995

ISRAEL
The National Council for the Child on December 7 protested to the Health and Religious Affairs ministries against the performance of ritual circumcisions by a 13-year-old boy. Yishai Sharabi’s father, Attniel, a mohel, told reporters, “From the day he was born, I could see that Yishai was suited to be a mohel.” Attniel “marvels” that his son is so talented and enthusiastic. Hadassah, Yishai’s mother, however, wishes he would spend less time practicing his technique and more time playing with friends. The Jerusalem Post Magazine, December 1995

MOROCCO
At an inventors’ fair an “automatic circumcision scalpel” was introduced that cauterizes blood vessels and cuts and stitches the wound, all, it’s claimed, without bleeding, pain or the need for anesthetic. National News Radio, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 13 June 1995

UNITED STATES
California: Assembly Bill 2125, the “California State Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act,” introduced by Assembly Members Figueroa and Cunneen on February 1, 1996, states that “The State Department of Health Services shall establish and implement appropriate education, preventative, and outreach activities in communities that traditionally practice female circumcision, excision, or infibulation, for the purpose of informing members of those communities of the health risks and emotional trauma inflicted by these practices and informing those communities and the medical community of the prohibition and ramifications of Section 273.4 of the Penal Code,” including “Female genital mutilation is a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison.”

Colorado: The Senate Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to support SB 31, which brands the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) blatant child abuse. Introduced by Senator Dorothy Rupert, the bill states that culture or custom is no defense for mutilation, and would allow criminal penalties against practitioners and parents who force their daughters to undergo the procedure. Rupert’s intent is to educate such parents to prevent the practice from occurring. Rep. Pat Schroeder’s bill, HR 941, is now with Congress’ Health & Environment Subcommittee. Daily Camera, 24 January 1996

Illinois: A Strategy Summit of NOCIRC/NOHARM/INTACT NETWORK, to be held in Chicago on April 11-14, 1996, coincides with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ meeting there. For more information, contact Paul Kieken, 708-497-7076 (9a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays) or 708-301-1414 (after 7:30 p.m. and weekends).

SWITZERLAND
The Fourth International Symposium on Sexual Mutilations will be held in Lausanne from August 9-11, 1996. (See page 6 for details.)

“It may well be that a society’s greatest madness seems normal to itself.”
Allan Bloom
The Closing of the American Mind
NEWS FROM NORM

For information about the NORM group in your area, contact Wayne Griffiths, 3205 Northwood Drive #209, Concord, CA 94520. Phone: 510-827-4077. Fax: 510-827-4119. E-mail: Waynerobb@aol.com.

Everyman’s Birthright – NORM (formerly Uncirc SA), Yanwyn Kirby, POB 8106, Hindley Street, Adelaide, SA 5000, AUSTRALIA.

NORM – UK has a new address: POB 71, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0SF ENGLAND.

This group’s aim is to:
• oppose genital mutilation of children of both sexes for whatever reason in Britain and elsewhere,
• provide information about normal genitalia,
• provide information about the conservative management of foreskin problems in boys,
• provide factual information and psychological support to men who have been circumcised and wish to regain a foreskin.

NORM – Southern California:
Meetings provide a forum in which men can share their concerns about circumcision and a network for those engaged in foreskin restoration. For information, call 310-839-5441.

Did you know that...
• 5% of the world’s males are circumcised as infants and that more than half of these males are circumcised in the U.S.?
• 70% of all circumcised men are Muslim, circumcised between the ages of 2 and 17, and that circumcision is not a religious requirement?
• there are five times more male than female victims of genital mutilation in the world?

NORM NEWS, Summer 1995

Letters To The Editor

Cruel and Barbaric: “I applaud your efforts to prevent cruel and barbaric assaults on infants. They are defenseless and need someone to speak for them.” W.D.P., M.D., OH

Needs Lubricant: “My parents had me circumcised when I was 16 after they caught me masturbating. Before this forced circumcision, I never had to use lubricant. Now I need it, and I’ve found that my penile sensitivity has most definitely decreased. My glans has become tougher, less sensitive, and has even changed color.” C.G., NY

Right Choice: “We have three sons under five, none of whom are circumcised. This was not due to any so-called education on our part, but just an immediate gut-reaction of ‘No.’ We’d like a little more information so we can help our sons and ourselves understand a little better what we know for sure was the right choice for them.” R.B., OR

Two Die: “While working at a major children’s hospital in Brisbane, I saw two baby boys die as a result of circumcision. It had not occurred to me to question the value of this procedure prior to that, even though I had assisted in many of them. I always found it extremely upsetting but, much to my embarrassment now, I didn’t voice my displeasure. My wife almost convinced me to have my own son circumcised, but I could not bear the thought of having him subjected to this barbaric money spinner for no good reason at all.” T.D., R.N., Australia

Boycott: “We have decided to boycott any doctor who does circumcisions.” A.B., NC

Write: “It would help if men wrote polite but firm letters to the doctors who circumcised them, describing problems caused by circumcision, because doctors would be getting feedback from those most hurt by the surgery.” H.M., IL

Hurt: “Circumcision hurts everybody. But it is the grown men who have gotten past the denial stage who know the hurt most personally. And it’s us who can make a difference. We’ve got to end our silence. We’ve got to speak up and speak out, not about the evils of routine infant circumcision, but about our own circumcision and our own hurt.” K.A., CA

Perversion: “I cannot understand why so few people appreciate the fact that an infant’s body belongs to him and to no one else, and that only he has any right to give up any part of it, unless there is an urgent need in order to save his life. NOBODY has any right to inflict this disgusting perversion, this filthy abomination, on a newborn baby. Anyone who presumes to do so should be sent to prison. If I can help save some helpless boy from the lifelong anguish I have had to suffer, I am willing to expose my status as a victim.” E.W., VA

Bottom Line: “Infant circumcision is foreskin amputation by force. That is the bottom line.” J.E., MS

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NOCIRC T-Shirts For Babies. Protect your baby from an “accidental” hospital circumcision. Red letters on white. Cotton. Two sizes: To 16 lbs. and 17-32 lbs. $7.95 each, two for $14. NOCIRC, POB 2512, San Anselmo, CA 94979.

NEW GROUPS
Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting human rights principles in pediatrics, obstetric and family practice. D.O.C. serves the medical community by providing physicians with scientific educational materials and support, and advice to health professionals who seek to stop the genital mutilation of minors. D.O.C. also provides a forum for ethical patient advocacy and for a reform of medical practice. George C. Denniston, M.D., MPH, 2442 NW Market St., Suite 42, Seattle, WA 98107.

Parents of Intact Sons. Information about the advantages of keeping your sons intact and support group for parents of intact boys. Susan Peer, RR 1, Box 1524-A, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301. Tel: 717-223-1337.

Rainbo®, a non-profit organization emphasizing every woman’s right to reproductive and sexual health, is committed to facilitating inter-cultural dialogue to define, implement and protect those rights. Nahid Toubia, M.D., Dir., Rainbo®, 915 Broadway, Ste. 1603, NY, NY 10010. Tel: 212-477-3318. Fax: 212-477-4154. E-mail: NT61@columbia.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
$5 Needed to Publish Book: Circumcision: The Hidden Trauma, How an American Cultural Practice Affects Infants and Ultimately Us All, by Ronald Goldman, Ph.D. Forward by Ashley Montagu. The first intensive exploration of the psychological and social factors associated with circumcision. Autographed copy with $50 donation, acknowledgement in the book (with permission) with $100 donation. Make your tax-deductible donation payable to Circumcision Resource Center, POB 232, Boston, MA 02138.

We Need Your Names! A new NOCIRC brochure will feature, in very small letters in the background, the names of thousands of parents who have chosen not to circumcise their babies. We hope yours will be one of those names! If you would like to be included, please send us your name with your permission to use it. NOCIRC, POB 2512, San Anselmo, CA 94979-2512.
**TWO POWERFUL NEW VIDEO DOCUMENTARIES**

*Whose Body, Whose Rights?*, a video documentary by Lawrence Dillon and Tim Hammond, premiered in San Francisco, January 4-7, 1996. This powerful two-part documentary examines the ethics and human rights aspects of routine infant circumcision. Part I, "Wounding Our Children, Wounding Ourselves," identifies the problem. Part II, "Healing Ourselves, Healing Society," explores ways that people are creating social change. The documentary is scheduled for broadcast on PBS affiliate KIXE (Channel 9, Redding, California), March 28 at 10pm. Other broadcasts are being scheduled.

Ordering information for both videos, page 5.

*It's A Boy!,* Victor Schonfeld's documentary, which aired on London's Channel 4, was seen by 2.1 million viewers on September 21, 1995. Channel 4 has received well over 2,000 calls, which, except for a few, were overwhelmingly supportive, and there has been a flood of laudatory press. Consultant pediatric surgeon/urologist, Laurie Rangecroft, reviewed the documentary for the *British Medical Journal* (9/23/95), saying, "There are no medical reasons for excising a normal foreskin. Paediatricians and paediatric surgeons have been preaching this message for decades... The myth that circumcision is just a 'quick snip' and that newborns don't feel pain anyway were comprehensively demolished by the evidence in this generally well balanced documentary."

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**THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEXUAL MUTILATIONS**

University of Lausanne, Switzerland
August 9-11, 1996

Presenters include health-care professionals, medical researchers, scholars, and legal experts from Europe, North America, Australia and Africa addressing the human rights, medical, ethical and legal implications of male and female sexual mutilations. English is the language of the symposium.

Continuing Education Credits for nurses.

**Brochures:** For program and registration information, send SASE to NOCIRC.

**Early Registration** (U.S. Currency): $45/session, $90/day, $250/entire program. **On-Site Registration** (Swiss Francs only) 60 Fr./session, 150 Fr./day, 350 Fr./entire program.

**Work scholarships available.**

**Accommodations:** Jeunotel (least expensive), Chemin du Bois-de-Vaux 36, CH-1007, Lausanne, Switzerland, Phone: ++ 41 21 626 02 22. Fax: ++ 41 21 626 02 26.

The Lausanne Tourist Office and Convention Bureau has an individual reservation form with rates for rooms (1 or 2 beds, with/without baths). Send your specific needs and their Information Department will confirm your reservation. Forms available from Lausanne Tourist Office, Ref. Service Information, P.O. Box 49, CH - 1000 Lausanne 6, Switzerland. Tel.: ++ 41=21=613-7321. Fax: ++ 41 21 616 8647.

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**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION of CIRCUMCISION INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS**

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FAX: 415/488-9660

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