

Newborn Bleeds to Death after Doctor Persuades Parents to Circumcise Baby

Ryan Heydari's parents did not want their son circumcised but were persuaded by an Ontario family physician. The 22-day-old baby bled to death in 2013 following the circumcision, but the death only became public because the couple appealed the original Ontario College of Physician and Surgeons ruling, which was rendered in secret. *National Post*, 11/2/15.

Florida Boy Circumcised Against His and His Mother's Wishes

Chase Hironimus was four when he was taken by his mother, Heather Hironimus, into a shelter to protect him from the circumcision he did not want. Police found Heather, arrested her, seized Chase, and delivered him to Dennis Nebus, the father who wanted him circumcised. In a courtroom drama, Judge Jeffrey Dana Gillen forced Heather to sign a consent form for circumcision against her will or remain in jail. Heather did not see Chase, now five, for six months, not until she was notified by her attorney that Chase had been circumcised and, when the wound didn't heal, another doctor diagnosed Chase with leukemia. The circumcising doctor neglected to order blood work before the surgery, and evidently neither he nor Nebus noticed Chase's poor health. Refusing to allow a 4-year-old to see his mother for six months would cause extreme stress in any child, a concept the boy's father and the Florida judge do not seem to understand. Early trauma and emotional loss induce beliefs, including "bad things happen because I'm a bad person; good things happen because I'm a good person. But if bad things happen, I'm a bad person, I deserve it, I caused it, I'm unworthy." In order for Heather to see Chase now, she must pay a mediator, who is required to be present during visits.

Intersex Activist Denied a Passport Sues the US Government

Dana Zzyym has struggled to conform to social and legal categories of a binary gender system, but is now suing the State Department claiming it violated constitutional rights when it denied Zzyym a US passport for failing to pick either a male or female gender box. Lambda Legal, an LGBT civil rights group, filed the lawsuit, claiming the State Department and Colorado Passport Agency locked "Dana within the confines of our nation's borders with no legal means to depart the United States because it does not recognize gender identity beyond male and female." The suit says the State Department violated Amendment V of the Constitution, which guarantees that no one "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" and the Equal Protection Clause of Amendment XIV, which protects against discrimination based

on sex. Zzyymm, a Navy veteran, fought to understand gender in a world that required a choice between either male or female. Zzyym's parents never talked about it and Zzyym had to discover it alone. By 2011, Zzyym came to terms with being intersex and, the following year, changed the birth certificate from "male" to "unknown." [Editors note: One end of the spectrum is all male and, on the other end, all female. In between are all the variations, and the amazing diversity Nature brings! It's not infants' and children's bodies that need to be altered to fit our binary gender system, it's our minds and our system that need to change to accept gender variations!]

13-Year-Old Girl Banished for Refusing to Undergo Circumcision

A 13-year-old Ghanian girl was banished by the Queenmother of Brohani for reporting to police an attempt to mutilate her genitals. The girl, lined up for surgery, heard the screams of another girl, fled, and informed her teacher, who subsequently reported the issue to Ms. Comfort Meanu. She, along with the girl and the teacher, reported the case to the Department of Social Welfare. Subsequently, a formal complaint was lodged with the police, which led to the arrest of the alleged perpetrators, including the Queenmother, a relative of the girl, and the executor of FGM. Police referred the case to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit. The alleged perpetrators have been released on bail. The Queenmother allegedly threatened to have the girl killed if she sets foot in the community, which has compelled the girl to seek refuge. <http://pulse.com.gh>, 4/16/15.

Circumcision Exacerbates HIV in Malawi

According to a 2015 Malawi report, Medicins San Frontieres (MSF) statistics show HIV rates have doubled in recent years. Infection rates went from 10% to 20% in one year, during the period Malawians have been manipulatively forced to undergo circumcision en masse to prevent the spread of HIV. <http://allafrica.com>, 8/4/15.

Metzitzah B'Peh and Herpes

The New York City Health Department, AAP, CDC, and other authorities have warned about the dangers of metzitzah b'peh, practiced by ultra-Orthodox and some Orthodox Jews, in which the mohel (circumciser) sucks blood from the penis of a newly-circumcised baby. Since 2000, 13 herpes cases, including two brain damaged infants and two deaths, have been reported. Mayor Bill de Blasio and Orthodox leaders celebrated a deal to abandon the city's modest effort to regulate the practice that required parents to sign a waiver acknowledging the risks of the practice. This leaves the Orthodox community to voluntarily limit the damage, but only after a baby gets sick, not before. In the latest case, parents have refused to identify the mohel. *The New York Times*, 2/27/15.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends and Supporters of NOCIRC,

After 30 years as the leader of the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers, I am writing this letter to tell you about some exciting changes.

When Sheila Curran and I wrote the papers for our NOCIRC non-profit status in 1985, our purpose for the organization was to provide information to educate parents, healthcare professionals, and others on the subject of routine circumcision. During the next decade, we learned more about the issue, and our first pamphlet, *Answers to Your Questions about NOCIRC*, says our organization is dedicated to "securing the birthright of male, female, and intersex infants and children to keep their sex organs intact." Our commitment has not changed in 30 years.

Other organizations followed, including Doctors Opposing Circumcision, Nurses for the Rights of the Child, Attorneys for the Rights of the Child, the International Coalition for Genital Integrity, the National Organization to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males (NOHARMM), the National Organization of Restoring Men (NORM), NORM-UK, Bay Area Intactivists, and more. NOCIRC Centers were formed worldwide to educate people locally. And, in 1989 NOCIRC hosted the first International Symposium on Circumcision, which became a regular event, now called the *International Symposia on Genital Autonomy and Children's Rights*. The 14th symposium will be held at Keele University, 14-16 September 2016.

In 2007, a major donor asked me about our movement and how we were managing the resources we had. With that question in mind, I organized a conference call with a group of leaders in our movement, which was the beginning of the formation of a new organization. After a phone call and two in-person meetings, we had a name *Intact America (IA)*. Our third meeting was held in May 2008, at the offices of the Hudson Center for Health Equity and Quality, a nonprofit organization located in Tarrytown, NY. Georganne Chapin, an attorney and the head of the Hudson Center, accepted our invitation to head IA, which she has been doing ever since. While condemning all forced genital surgery, Intact America focuses on the issue of male infant and childhood circumcision in the United States, the only country in the world that still circumcises more than half of our baby boys without medical justification.

As we all know, the movement to end infant male circumcision has exploded since the beginning days of NOCIRC. Much of the work is being done online and new groups have taken action locally as well as "on the road." Knowing this has allowed me to shift my focus.

We know that female immigrants are at risk in the USA, even though FGM is outlawed here. Intersex children, who are as common in society as redheads, are living childhoods of surgery, secrecy, and shame instead of being accepted for the people they are and afforded the self-determination that is rightfully theirs.

With all of this in mind, the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (NOCIRC) has

retired its name and adopted the name *Genital Autonomy - America (GA-America)*. *Autonomy* means self-governing and self-determination. We believe all people have that right, with regard to their own bodies. Genital Autonomy was conceived as an organization in 2008 by Paul Mason, Tasmanian Former Commissioner for Children, at our 9th International Symposium at Keele University. He recognized the power of the International Child for Genital Autonomy, the logo of our symposia, and the need to protect *all* children worldwide. David Smith founded Genital Autonomy (GA) in the UK that same year as an umbrella organization for an international effort, and adopted the International Child logo. GA-America joins GA-Finland, GA-Canada, and the Australasian Institute for Genital Autonomy as offshoots of the original international charity registered in the UK. Genital Autonomy will host the International Symposia on Genital Autonomy and Children's Rights. Information about past and future symposia can now be found at www.GAAmerica.org.

The name NOCIRC will be discontinued, but people will still find the NOCIRC website online, and be able to see how we are expanding our focus to include education about all children who need our protection. The NOCIRC educational pamphlets will be available on our website in pdf format, for those who want to print and disseminate them. Our educational video will also be available on our website.

We will no longer have NOCIRC Centers, but the Centers people who want to be included will have their names listed on the NOCIRC website *Resources* page. Some Centers will rebrand themselves and acquire their own nonprofit status while others will simply continue to do the work as they see fit.

In December, our GA-America panel spoke at the 19th International Congress of the Association of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health. I spoke about GA-America and MGM, Soraya Miré spoke about FGM, and Steven Svoboda spoke about the rights of the child and how it applies to all children. Hida Viloría, Chairperson of Organization Intersex International, was unable to join us to speak about Intersex, as she had at our GA-America panel in May at the BirthKeepers Summit, but she, too is a committed part of our team. This powerful educational panel touches on all aspects of genital cutting, the harm of traditional and cultural practices, and the rights of the child. We'll speak as often as we can to educate the public. If you'd like to invite our GA-America panel to present, please contact me. The phone number and address remain the same.

This is my 40th newsletter in 30 years. I have written the newsletters to provide information, but news is coming so fast now that it has become difficult to keep up and overwhelming to report. I will write a *Spring GA-America Letter* and a *GA-America Fall Update* for our supporters, friends, and those who are concerned. Those of you who would like daily updates can access current news from various sites, including www.IntactAmerica.org and <https://www.facebook.com/IntactAmerica?fref=ts>), GenitalAutonomy.org, www.15square.org.uk, MenDoComplain.org, BloodstainedMen.com, and BayAreaIntactivists.org. Additional resources can be found

on the Bulletin Board page of this and our other newsletters (www.nocirc.org/publish).

Some people have asked if I'm retiring. *How could I?* Besides establishing and leading GA-America, I am working on a book about the history of NOCIRC, I continue to field dozens of phone calls and emails every week, and I work with Georganne and Intact America, writing the monthly "Do You

Know..." feature for the IA newsletter. I want to thank all of you for your efforts on behalf of infants and children and for your friendship, and I hope you will support me in my new endeavors as the movement for the rights of all children continues to evolve locally, nationally, and globally.

With deep appreciation,



Letters to the Editor

On Terminology:

"For my use, both terms, *genital integrity* and *genital autonomy*, are equally useful. Vocabulary is constantly evolving for many reasons. For me, the use of these two terms, both interchanging them and using them in tandem in conversation helps to clarify our intactivist perspective and goals. To describe my work as an intactivist I might say, 'I work to educate about and promote the *genital integrity* of every child, and *genital autonomy* for every person, as an adult to make choices for their own body.

"Using the term *genital autonomy* also helps people connect the dots to other aspects of human sexuality and human rights: "What I choose to do with my genitals sexually (who I choose to be sexual with) is my own business. This allows the person considering what I have said to reflect on their own condition. If I am talking with an adult who has for whatever reason decided to alter their own genitals in any way, they can nod and agree (thinking about their own *genital autonomy*, while recognizing that body modifications shouldn't be made on a child's body.

"I will continue to use both terms and add others (as they are discovered) that help to clarify our meaning to anyone who is interested". – James, Loewen, Vancouver, BC.

From a Prison Inmate:

"You asked how many men convicted of sex offenses have been circumcised. While I don't have an exact number, I would say *most*. Probably as high as 98-99% at the prison I was in. We had open showers and I saw, and I knew what the majority of guys were in for. The majority of the men are circumcised. I saw very few other intact men. The majority of those who were intact were immigrants, mostly Hispanic. There were several Russian/Eastern European men who were intact. Even among these inmates, aged 18-24, most were circumcised. So, what impact did circumcision have on these men? What role did it play?

"I was part of a Restorative Justice-based group formed by inmates and volunteers in the Conflict Resolution Graduate Degree Program at a local university. I went through the 33-week program, then went back twice as a facilitator. I also helped develop a Personal Development Group, focusing on masculinity (toxic/healthy), sexuality, and gender (looking at gender and gender roles on a sliding scale instead of an either/or). This group was also run with volunteers from local universities.

"In the Restorative Justice Group, we had to share our crimes, taking full responsibility, and were asked questions to clarify parts the group didn't understand or were called out if it was

thought we were leaving something out or being untruthful. We learned that crime is a symptom of something else going on in a person's life. So, we shared about our childhood and what was going on in our lives. We found that the crimes committed were an accumulation of events in life. Often, it was a series of little things, combined with childhood trauma. None of the things by themselves would lead to crime, but the combination for that person led them on a path of crime.

"It was always a process, several things adding up to the decision-making process, and most often the men felt they had no other option. We also learned that shame played a huge role in crime and the way we thought about ourselves. It became apparent that, even in those convicted of things other than sex crimes, there was a lot of shame over sex, sexual issues, and body image. Though there is no direct evidence linking circumcision to the crimes, I feel very strongly that it could have played a role.

"Those men I knew who were in prison for rape were all circumcised. They all talked about an early distrust of women, starting with their mothers. Could circumcision have played a role in this even if they didn't consciously remember it? In the womb, you hear your mother's voice, then, right after you are born, you hear the voice more. She comforts you, breastfeeds you, promises to protect you, then hands you to a doctor and your penis is cut—causing great pain. That could breed distrust! When combined with abuse, neglect, failure to protect from dads, step-dads, or boyfriends, etc., then, as a teen or young adult, some bad relationships, girlfriends or wives cheating—these add to the trauma. A change in any of these things could have changed the path.

"In the groups, we learned we could not change the past but we could learn to come to terms with the bad things that happened to us so we wouldn't let them dictate our future actions/reactions.

"In those circumcised men who committed sex crimes against children that involved the fondling of the child's genitals, about 95% reported sexual dysfunction. They reported having issues with arousal/orgasm with their wives/girlfriends. They had so much shame they pushed their partners away or were pushed away, so had no appropriate affection. The sexual abuse of children for many really was not about sex, it was about closeness and affection. None of that justifies the behavior or makes it okay but I can see how circumcision contributed to their sexual dysfunction, which contributed to their horrible decision-making. No matter the variables, they do not justify the crime, but we do need to learn from them and begin to change them to prevent future crimes.

"I also heard the stories of many men circumcised as babies or young boys who committed violent crimes, including murder. Circumcision may not be directly linked to their actions but I can't help but think that starting lives off with a very violent act, causing great pain and distrust, is a contributing factor. Some men recover from it, but for others, it starts them in a hole. We also know that intact men commit violent and sex crimes, too, for varying reasons, so circumcision is not completely to blame, but it seems like it could be one of the many things that contributes to a person's criminal behavior.

"I wonder, too, how much circumcision has contributed to the overall erectile and sexual dysfunction in American men? Could circumcision contribute to the need for drugs like Viagra? Doctors, hospitals, and the medical industry make money from circumcision, which contributes to erectile dysfunction. How much more money do drugs add to the profit of circumcision?" RD, Oregon

Letter to a Son-in-Law

"I have great love and respect for you, and I trust that we will continue to be blessed with an open and caring rapport.

"My first grandchild, your first son, will arrive soon. Each of us is filled with joyful anticipation! This man-child enters this world perfect, as God made him. And we, his family, are entrusted to protect his perfection. I write this from my heart with the fierce love and reckless honesty of a protective grandmother. Your son is my grandson. I must speak my truth.

"To preface, I was raised in a culture that purports to value and promote independent thinking and respect for individual rights. Therefore, I have some difficulty understanding collective thought and group identity.

"With deep respect for you as an individual, for your culture, and your religious beliefs, I now carefully approach a subject of great emotional sensitivity: circumcision. I will share my thoughts and feelings.

"Reasons for circumcision are rooted in ritual and in the interpretation of religious text. Medical research, however, does not support the efficacy of this surgical procedure.

"Both my father's and my mother's families are traditionally Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox). The circumcision of males is not a religious ritual in Eastern Orthodoxy, and Catholic doctrine neither supports nor promotes the routine practice of this surgical procedure, sanctioning circumcision only in cases of medical necessity. You, my son, are Catholic, and if you were circumcised, I would guess the reason would be cultural. You grew up in a predominantly Muslim culture, and this ritual is practiced by most (all?) adherents. For group identity, a people adheres to that which is acceptable, for solidarity, to fit in and not stand out as different. As I mentioned to you once, my first true love was Muslim. He was circumcised when he was seven years old. He had been coerced by adults before he had reached an age of discernment, which might have allowed him to make an adult choice to give his personal consent concerning the permanent alteration of his body.

"Most Muslims and Jews still staunchly support and promote circumcision. The basis for their fervor is not logical, but emotional. People are very passionate with regard to their beliefs. That said, an increasing number of Jews and Muslims have begun questioning/challenging both the efficacy and the judiciousness of circumcision with regard to autonomy, ethics, and human rights.

"My concern regards the questionable safety, injustice, and permanence of this ritual. Whose body? Whose rights? Do parents indeed 'own' their children? Does a child not have rights to his own bodily integrity? And might a child, in adulthood, choose different beliefs from his family?

"The philosopher Khalil Gibran advised that our children come through us, not from us. Our children are separate beings, just as we are separate beings from our parents. Are we not each deserving of the respect that allows us to make our own choices for the permanent alteration of our own bodies?

"A parent's instinct is to protect his child, allowing surgical intervention only when medically necessary, and most certainly with the provision of adequate anesthesia to prevent abject pain/torture. Performing a surgical procedure for non-medical reasons, coupled with failure to provide adequate anesthesia, violates medical ethics, moral responsibility, and human compassion and dignity. Circumcision is, in fact, the surgical amputation of living tissue for cosmetic purposes, as extensive research worldwide has found no evidence of medical benefit from this procedure, though many proponents routinely circumvent the data, striving to garner support for their beliefs. And, this surgery, like all surgeries, is potentially dangerous.

"Every normal, healthy human male is born with a foreskin, the absence of which would constitute abnormality. This leads to the assumption that this tissue has purpose, is meant to be there. Medical journals contain information regarding both the purpose and the function of the foreskin. Form cannot be changed without affecting function. Circumcision undermines the integrity of the sexual organ.

"Finally, are we trying to improve upon nature's perfection? Do we think God made a mistake?

"I cannot decide for you, my son. Your child's trust in you starts here. His fate is in your hands.

"Sincerely, with love and care, Mom"

An Educator Writes:

"When you started your crusade against routine infant circumcision, who would have guessed that it would have taken so long? After all, tonsillectomies quickly disappeared when no medical use was found for them. Yet, circumcision persists long after no medical use is offered for it. Somebody is getting something out of it. We can take comfort in knowing that it is gradually fading away—thanks you to." JR Robertson, PhD, California



Letters to the Editor (cont.)

And, a Poem:

Circumcision

Of Western countries, the United States
Has the highest circumcision rates.
I've heard the reasons. They all are bad:
To keep it cleaner... To look like Dad.
If we can learn to clean our teeth,
We can also wash "down underneath."
Some quote a study saying it's the answer
To lowering rates of AIDS and cancer.
On that matter, I have this retort.
Statistical errors in that report.
We have foreskin for a purpose:
Millions of nerve cells on its surface.
When you cut your newborn baby
Have you thought... perhaps... just maybe...
What you do without his consent
He just may grow up to resent?
No good reasons exist, in fact,
So skip the cut. Leave it intact.
And even though you may abhor it,
Trust me. Your son will love you for it.
I'll share a secret. It's just between us:
I still have my entire penis.
– Glen Webner

When a baby has experienced a primal wound, he will be affected by the wounding for the rest of his life. Instead of "taming" the sexual drive, circumcised men are apt to spend their lives trying to capture what was stolen from them—a normal sex life. When sexuality is repressed, it often is expressed in aberrant behavior. Mother Nature made sure that the genitals feel better than any other body part and, coupled with a strong sex drive, these attributes will ensure procreation and survival of the species. Is the reason for amputation of the foreskin to deny normal sexual feelings because of fear of the sex drive, the most powerful drive of all, or because older males, fearing a take-over by younger virile men, maintain their power by wounding the younger men? Wounded men, not understanding what normal sex is, become intent on making sure that other men don't either and, as elders, they pass the wounding on to the next generation. In a patriarchy, males are the first victims. How else can aging men maintain their power and control? Hopefully, as men recognize the harm inherent in their own wound, this wounding will come to an end. – Marilyn Fayre Milos, RN

Laws, Lawsuits, & Legislation

"All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law..." – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art 7) adopted 10 Dec 1948

CANADA

Montreal – The Quebec College of Physicians fined a Montreal doctor \$20,000 for botching 31 circumcisions so badly that the babies had to undergo corrective surgery. Dr. Raymond Resaie pleaded guilty to all charges at a December hearing, and he has been banned from performing circumcision. The investigations began in 2013 after parents and some doctors at Sainte-Justine Hospital complained about the large number of complications from Rezaie's circumcisions. www.cjad.com, 12/22/15.

UNITED STATES

Chicago, Illinois – On July 14, Glenda Manning and her son, Marquese Robinson, filed a complaint in Cook County Circuit Court against Dr. Lawrence Boysen, the University of Chicago Medical Center, and OB/GYN Health Associates SC. Boysen circumcised Robinson just after he was born, causing him to suffer "bleeding, deformation of the penis, and other complications," the lawsuit states. Mother and son seek \$100,000 in damages, plus costs. They are represented by the Law Offices of Craig L. Manchik and Associates PC in Chicago. <http://cookcountyrecord.com>, 7/16/15.

Miriam Rodriguez, mother of Angel Rodriguez, filed a lawsuit on 9/21 in Cook County Circuit Court against Advocate North Side Health Network doing business as Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Advocate Health & Hospitals Corp.

doing business as Advocate Medical Group, Dr. Elise Halajian and Dr. Gloria Redondo. The suit says Halajian and Redondo improperly circumcised Angel, leading to tissue loss, disfigurement, loss of sensation, and additional corrective surgeries. As a result of the injuries, the suit alleges Angel suffered mental pain, anguish, and loss of a normal life, and seeks punitive damages of more than \$50,000, litigation costs, reimbursement for lost wages, and additional medical costs. Cindy G. Fluxgold of Goldstein Fluxgold and Baron in Chicago are representing the mother. *Cook County Circuit Court case number 2015-009624.*

Ocala, Florida – Larry Leroy Floyd, 24, was charged with attempting to circumcise his nephew with a kitchen knife, police said. Sgt. Michael Sommer said, they received a call that a 20-month-old boy had been cut, but by the time officers arrived, the boy's father had taken him to the hospital. www.orlandosentinel.com, 2/1/15.

Georgia – The Law Firm of Jonathan W. Johnson, LLC, filed a lawsuit (9/25/14) on behalf of Stacie Willis, as parent of her infant son, DeJuan Williams, who had the end of his penis amputated during circumcision. Ms. Willis took her son to Life Cycle OB/GYN and Pediatrics in Riverdale for circumcision in October 2013. Nurse Midwife Melissa Jones circumcised DeJuan with a Mogen Clamp. On 5/20/15, Judge Aaron B. Mason granted the Plaintiff's motion to add as defendants, Teleflex Incorporated and Teleflex Medical Incorporated, the alleged manufacturer of Mogen clamps. The infant has undergone several corrective surgeries and his future medical needs and expenses are expected to exceed \$1,000,000. www.digitaljournal.com, 5/31/15.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Benjamin Hoekstra, born 3/19/10 in Oxnard, California, was circumcised one week later. The tip of Hoekstra's penis was amputated, allegedly due to the defective nature of a Mogen Clamp. A lawsuit, brought by Benjamin's mother Victoria Hoekstra of Garden Grove, California, against West Chester defendants Misdorn-Frank Corporation, Sklar Corporation, and Medco Group, Inc., states Hoekstra sustained permanent injury and will require future corrective surgeries. Plaintiffs say the Mogen Clamp accounts for the majority of penile amputations, with more than 20 reports made to the FDA this year. They claim the defendants have not changed the product design, suppressed the information, and failed to share it with both healthcare providers and patients, despite alleged awareness of these defects. Plaintiffs are seeking a sum, jointly and severally, in excess of \$50,000, plus compensatory damages, punitive damages, costs, and other relief. They are represented by Lee B. Balefsky of Kline & Spector in Philadelphia. Defendants are represented by Megan Grossman and Kim Nguyen of Seal McCambridge Singer & Mahoney, also in Philadelphia. *Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas case 150402154*, 10/21/15.

South Carolina – Pam and Mark Crawford say surgeons in Charleston and Greenville performed unnecessary sex assignment surgery on their son—named MC in court records—when

he was 16 months old. MC was born with both male and female reproductive organs, but "there was no medical necessity to remove any of his genital tissue," his adoptive parents said in their lawsuit. Doctors should have let MC choose a gender for himself. "Our client's penis was surgically removed for no medical reason. He's going to have to live with that for the rest of his life," said attorney Anne Tamar-Mattis, legal director for Advocates for Informed Choice. The Crawfords adopted MC from state custody after the SC Department of Social Services approved surgery that made him biologically female. But, MC wanted to be a boy—a decision his adoptive parents respected. "He made the social transition with the name change at 7," Pam Crawford said. "He's just like any other boy. He's been very well accepted in the community and the school and it's really just not been an issue." The Crawfords, who live in Columbia, filed federal and state lawsuits two years ago against Medical University of SC, Greenville Health System, and the SC Department of Social Services. The court dismissed their federal lawsuit in Charleston earlier this year. Defense lawyers argued that doctors weren't aware when they operated that they may have violated MC's civil rights. The state lawsuit in Richland County is moving forward. "The reason we're doing this is so some change is made. That's really what we see as important," Pam Crawford said. www.postandcourier.com, 5/16/15.

ARTICLES

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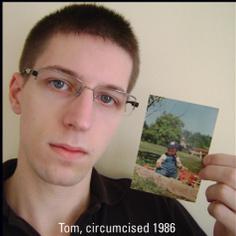
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"The people who maintain the structures of science, religion, and politics have one thing in common that they don't share with the rest of society. They are responsible for creating a technical language, incomprehensible to the rest of us, whereby we cede to them our right and responsibility to think. They in turn formulate a beautiful set of lies that lull us to sleep and allow us to forget about our troubles, eventually depriving us of all rights, including, increasingly, the right to live in a livable world."
– Vine Deloria (1933-2006), Native American author and activist, quoted in an interview with author Derrick Jensen in *How Shall I Live My Life?*



I DID NOT CONSENT










intactamerica.org

In more than 50 years of pediatric practice, I've never seen a single legitimate medical reason for foreskin amputation - never, not one! I think we have been lied to by a lot of people in the medical business, and we politely accepted what they said as fact. – Paul Fleiss, MD

A SKEPTICAL REPLY

"According to Brian Morris (2013), 'Science supports infant circumcision' and 'so should skeptics.' It would be more accurate to say that 'Brian Morris supports infant circumcision,' and that skeptics can think for themselves. In this paper, we critically assess the arguments and evidence presented by Morris...and draw some general lessons for the ongoing debate about the science and ethics of infant male circumcision." Earp BD & Darby R. "Does science support infant circumcision? A skeptical reply to Brian Morris." Earp BD & Darby R (2015). *The Skeptic*, 25(3). www.skeptic.org.uk/magazine/onlinearticles/articlelist/711-infant-circumcision and http://www.academia.edu/9872471/Does_science_support_infant_circumcision.

HYPOSPADIAS

"Hypospadias is a relatively common genital condition in which the urethral opening forms on the underside of the penis, as opposed to at the tip of the glans. Patients with hypospadias are typically referred for surgery during infancy or early childhood. Recent evidence, however, indicates that many individuals with hypospadias do not experience the functional or psychosocial difficulties commonly attributed to the condition, and that surgical intervention for hypospadias carries substantial risk of adverse outcomes...[S]urgery for hypospadias should be performed only if requested by the affected individual, under conditions of informed consent." Carmack A, Notini L, & Earp BD. Should Surgery for Hypospadias Be Performed Before An Age of Consent? *The Journal of Sex Research*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2015.1066745>.

"Believing that circumcision is harmful is not an 'opinion.' The hundreds of boys I have seen who needed surgery to repair problems caused by their circumcisions are real. The men who lost more parts of their penis than the foreskin are real. The thousands of adult men saying they wish they hadn't been cut are real. Not recognizing that circumcision is harmful is either ignorance or denial." – Adrienne Carmack, MD

LICHEN SCLEROSUS

"Lichen sclerosus (LS), a chronic, inflammatory disease primarily involving the genital skin and urethra in males. Historically, the treatment of this common condition was a challenge due to its uncertain etiology, variable response to therapy, and predilection to recur. The etiology of LS is still debated and has been linked to an autoimmune disease, infection, trauma, and genetics. Today, topical steroids are a mainstay of therapy for patients, even in the presence of advanced disease, and can induce regression of the disease. In advanced cases, surgery may be required and range from circumcision, meatoplasty, or, in the case of advanced stricture disease, urethroplasty or perineal urethrostomy....Surgical management should be approached only after failure of more conservative measures, due to the high risk of recurrence

of LS in the repaired site despite the use of buccal grafting. LS may be associated with the development of squamous cell carcinoma and for this reason, patients should undergo biopsy when LS is suspected and long-term surveillance is recommended." Belsante MJ, Selph JP, Peterson AC. The contemporary management of urethral strictures in men resulting from lichen sclerosus. *Transl Androl Urol*, 2015 Feb;4(1):22-8. doi: 10.3978/j.issn.2223-4683.2015.01.08.

MALE CIRCUMCISION

"...[I]n a healthy newborn, disease in the foreskin is non-existent. There is insufficient scientific evidence to support routine newborn circumcision in Australia done for UTI risk and HIV transmission issues alone. Therefore, any surgical complication and financial cost of routine newborn circumcision for these reasons...cannot be justified. From a medical point of view, the 'price' is still too high." Na AF, Tanny SPT, and Hutson JM (2015), Circumcision: Is it worth it for 21st-century Australian boys? *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 51:580-583. doi:10.1111/jpc.12825.

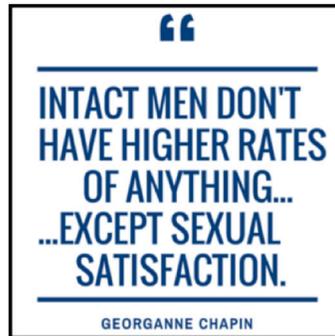
"The circumcision of newborn males in Canada has become a less frequent practice over the past few decades. This change has been significantly influenced by past recommendations from the Canadian Paediatric Society and the American Academy of Pediatrics, who both affirmed that the procedure was not medically indicated. Recent evidence suggesting the potential benefit of circumcision in preventing urinary tract infection and some sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, has prompted the Canadian Paediatric Society to review the current medical literature in this regard. While there may be a benefit for some boys in high-risk populations and circumstances where the procedure could be considered for disease reduction or treatment, the Canadian Paediatric Society does not recommend the routine circumcision of every newborn." Sorokan ST, Finlay JC, Jefferies AL. Canadian Paediatric Society, Fetus and Newborn Committee, Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee. *Paediatr Child Health* 2015;20(6):311-15.

"In 2015, the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) updated its position statement on newborn male circumcision. Reaching a different conclusion from that of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in 2012, the CPS did not find that the benefits of the procedure outweigh the risks and harms. In this brief commentary, I discuss some of the main strengths and weaknesses of the latest CPS statement." Earp BD. Strengths and weaknesses in the 2015 Canadian Paediatric Society statement on newborn male circumcision. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, in press.

MALE CIRCUMCISION AND HIV PREVENTION

"The technical consultation in Montreux, organised by World Health Organization and UNAIDS in 2007, recommended male circumcision as a method for preventing HIV transmission. This consultation came out of a long process of releasing reports and holding international and regional conferences, a process steered by an informal network. This network's relations with other parties is analysed along with its way of

working and the exchanges during the technical consultation that led up to the formal adoption of a recommendation.... [T]his consultation cannot be described as the constitution of a 'hybrid forum'...On the contrary, little room was allowed for contradictory discussions, as if the decision had already been made before the Montreux consultation." Giami A, Perrey C, Luiz de Oliveira Mendonça A, and Rochel de Camargo K. Hybrid forum or network? The social and political construction of an international 'technical consultation': Male circumcision and HIV prevention. *Global Public Health*, 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2014.998697>.



PAIN & TRAUMA

"...[W]e found that infants undergoing Mogen circumcision display less pain manifested by lower level of percent cortisol change, less postoperative alteration in heart rate and mean arterial blood pressure over a shorter procedure duration as compared to Gomco. However, neonatal pain scores were similar between the two groups." Sinkey RG, Eschenbacher MA, Walsh PM, et al. GoMo Study: Randomized clinical trial assessing neonatal pain with Gomco versus Mogen Clamp Circumcision. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2015), doi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2015.03.029. [Editor's note: The Mogen Clamp has been implicated in numerous lawsuits for causing loss of part or all of the glans penis. Intactivists demonstrated at the hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, where this study was conducted because of the pain and trauma inflicted on newborn babies by circumcision as well as the study interventions, including drawing the baby's blood to determine cortisol levels, and use of the dangerous Mogen Clamp. We already know babies suffer pain and trauma from circumcision, why subject babies to dangerous devices and additional pain to study which method causes less pain? We need to end these painful, traumatic, harmful, and unnecessary, procedures!]

Newborn babies should not be given sugar to relieve pain because it doesn't work and the pain may damage their brains. New research reported in the *Lancet* warns that small doses of oral sucrose are "not an effective pain relief drug... especially important in view of the increasing evidence that pain may cause short and long-term adverse effects on infant neurodevelopment," according to Dr. Rebecca Slater, who led the Medical Research Council-funded study at the University College of London. www.theguardian.com, 4/21/15.

"The prevention of pain in neonates should be the goal of all pediatricians and healthcare professionals who work with neonates, not only because it is ethical but also because repeated painful exposure have the potential for deleterious consequences." Committee on Fetus and Newborn and Section on Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine. Prevention and Management of Procedural Pain in the Neonate: An Update. *Pediatrics*. 2016;137(2):e20154271.

We hope this statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics leads to a direct recommendation from the AAP to hospitals to stop circumcising baby boys. Unlike the other procedures mentioned, such as heel lances and IV insertions, circumcision pain lasts for days and interferes with maternal bonding and breastfeeding. In the absence of that, it remains the parents' responsibility to protect their baby boys if hospitals and doctors will not. – Intact America

"Non-therapeutic infant male circumcision is a permanent surgical alteration to the penis that may cause significant physical, sexual and psychological harm....In this paper, the extent and severity of these harms are considered and it is argued that they are more serious and more widespread than is commonly believed." Boyle GJ. Circumcision of Infants and Children: Short-Term Trauma and Long-Term Psychosexual Harm. *Advances in Sexual Medicine*, 2015, 5, 22-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/asm.2015N>

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The peer review process—long considered the gold standard of quality scientific research—is a "sacred cow" that should be slaughtered, Richard Smith, former editor of the *British Medical Journal*, said. There was no evidence that peer review was a good method of detecting errors and he claimed that "most of what is published in journals is just plain wrong or nonsense." www.independent.co.uk, 4/22/15.

PENIS SIZE

"Compelling evidence from many animal taxa indicates that male genitalia are often under postcopulatory sexual selection for characteristics that increase a male's relative fertilization success. There could, however, also be direct precopulatory female mate choice based on male genital traits. Before clothing, the nonretractable human penis would have been conspicuous to potential mates. This observation has generated suggestions that human penis size partly evolved because of female choice. Here we show, based upon female assessment of digitally projected life-size, computer-generated images, that penis size interacts with body shape and height to determine male sexual attractiveness....Our results support the hypothesis that female mate choice could have driven the evolution of larger penises in humans. More broadly, our results show that precopulatory sexual selection can play a role in the evolution of genital traits." Mautz, BS. Penis size interacts with body shape and height to influence male attractiveness. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*. PNAS 110(17):6925-6930.

PENILE KELOID FORMATION

"We report the successful management, 3 years postoperatively, of a penile shaft keloid excision with advancement reconstruction. Because our treatment did not involve administration of intralesional steroids, long-term complications were potentially avoided. Keloid is an uncommon sequelae of circumcision and should be treated aggressively to avoid potential future functional complications." Yong M, Afshar K MacNelly A, and Ameja JS. Management of pediatric penile keloid. *CanUrolAssocJ*. 2013 Sep-Oct; 7(9-10): E618-620.

REDEFINING HUMAN PENIS TYPES

"As times change, so too must the terms used to describe various processes and conditions. This fine tuning of lexicon occurs in scientific, geopolitical, and social arenas....It is time, yet again, for the medical community (and society) to universally replace an old, and potentially offensive term with a new, more clinical one so as to better capture the science, to eliminate the pejorative, and to avoid unintended offense: the term uncircumcised should be replaced with the term intact when referring to the natural, unaltered human penis... [T]hree useful, respectful, and scientifically sound terms to refer to the possible penis types exist: **Intact** (those in the natural state), **circumcised** (those with the prepuce removed), and **uncircumcised** (those with a restored prepuce or pseudo-prepuce)..." William G. Wallace. *Clinical Anatomy* 28:36-564 (2015).

SEXUAL FUNCTION

"Morris and Krieger (2013) have argued that male circumcision does not impact adversely on sexual sensation, satisfaction, and/or function...Morris and Krieger reach an implausible conclusion that is inconsistent with what is known about the anatomy and functions of the penile foreskin, and the likely effects of its surgical removal." Boyle GJ. "Does Male Circumcision Adversely Affect Sexual Sensation, Function, or Satisfaction? Critical Comment on Morris and Krieger (2013)." *Advances in Sexual Medicine*, 2015, 5, 7-12 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/asm.2015.52002>.

"Feldblum et al. (2015) argue that voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) using the ShangRing device leads to increased sexual pleasure, universally satisfying cosmetic outcomes, and virtually no delayed complications in a 2-3 year follow-up study. In this commentary, I suggest that socially desirable responding (SDR) is a likely candidate explanation for at least some of these reported findings, and I argue that this should have been controlled for using available measures. I also highlight evidence from the authors' own study for risk compensation as a result of circumcision (including decreased condom use and an increase in number of sexual partners) and ask why this adverse outcome was not emphasized as a cause for concern. I conclude by providing 6 concrete suggestions for improving future studies on circumcision." Earp BD. The need to control for socially desirable responding in studies on the sexual effects of male circumcision. www.plosone.org/annotation/listThread.action?root=87212, 9/22/15.

—♦—♦—♦—

It is regrettable that the CDC has chosen to position itself on the wrong side of scientific evidence with its endorsement of circumcision for male newborns and heterosexual adult males.... As a pediatrician, I am deeply troubled by this form of government-endorsed mutilation of children, fragile human beings who will forever be robbed of the right to make an informed decision on such a deeply personal matter carrying irreversible consequences. This is an egregious violation of personal autonomy and medical ethics –Dr. Alex T. Rotta, MD

World News

AFRICA

Introducing RIC to Africa was always the real main goal behind the HIV prevention myth—on the one hand to establish new markets, on the other to polish the reputation of the surgery in the US in order to slow or halt the decline in numbers of circumcisions. It clearly shows both the desperation of the organizers and their disregard for human rights, two circumstances that have dominated the debates all along. – Stefan Schritt, 9/25/2015.

Algeria – Infant circumcision has led to high risks for undiagnosed hemophiliac children. Health ministry instructions on infant circumcision have not been followed and many parents do not go to doctors but others who do may not have the tools to ascertain whether or not a child is at risk. www.ansamed.info, 7/18/15.

The Gambia – Parliament has approved a bill banning FGM and has set high penalties of imprisonment and fines for offenders. According to the new law, a person who engages in FGM could face up to three years in prison or a fine of \$1,250. If the act results in death, a person could face life imprisonment. *The Week in Children's Rights - CRIN mail 1462*, 1/14/16.

Ivory Coast – A mother was sentenced to one year in prison for taking her 4-year-old daughter to be circumcised. A relative who accompanied the mother received the same sentence as well as a hefty fine. The sentence is the lowest possible

under Ivorian law. "This is a warning," said prosecutor Hamed Diomande, "The next time, the punishment will be heavier." The first criminal prosecution was in 2012, when nine women were sentenced to jail terms for FGM of about 30 young girls in Katiola. www.thesundaily.my, 3/30/2015.

Kenya – An estimated 30 boys were forcibly circumcised by a non-governmental organization, the Impact Research Development Organisation based in Kisumu

with a clinic in Eldoret, when the boys came home for holiday. Mothers wailed uncontrollably after realizing their sons, some just 6-years-old, were circumcised without their consent and not in accordance with Kalenjin traditions. Sweets were used by people in cars to lure the boys. Three officers from the NGO were arrested and booked at Kapsoya Police Post. Parents have been warned to keep a close watch on their sons. www.nation.co.ke, 4/23/15.

Photo not Available

Cash compensation improves the uptake of HIV-prevention programs. Offering food vouchers resulted in significantly higher medical male circumcision, especially young men over 20 years. [Clearly, coercion rather than education appears to be what is driving acceptance of non-therapeutic circumcision.] www.aidsmap.com, 7/27/15.

A 40-year-old man, who evaded circumcision since primary school, was cornered by friends and frogmarched to a clinic for the procedure. Residents claimed he had to be circumcised because several of his relationships ended after women realized he was not circumcised. www.the-star.co.ke, 9/27/15.

South Africa – Doctors announced that the first man to receive a penile transplant successfully fathered a child. The father, now 21, was required by tradition to undergo circumcision when he turned 18. His penis was amputated to save his life after a botched circumcision. www.newseverday.com, 6/15/15.

Police rescued 11 teenage boys from forced circumcision after parents reported the youngsters, 13 to 18 years, were taken from the streets for the traditional but often dangerous operation. They were found because the boys' parents quickly filed a kidnapping complaint. A government commission found that 486 boys died between 2008 and 2014. www.france24.com, 6/18/15.

The risk of HIV and AIDS remains alarmingly high among South African (SA) teens. Research shows that the incidence of new infections among young females is more than four times that of males, probably because they are having sex with older males. With over 400,000 new infections each year, SA still ranks first in HIV incidence in the world. And, thinking that circumcision has protected them, males now are not using condoms. www.rnews.co.zn/article/7534 2/1/16.

The principal of the Noordgesig Primary School in Johannesburg was removed following the circumcision of 3 out of 40 boys taken to an undisclosed location without parental permission. There will be disciplinary hearings against principal Cindy Tsotsotso and her two deputies. www.15square.org.uk/, 11/6/15.

Swaziland – Circumcision is perceived as a threat to Swazi masculinity, a study found. Men believe circumcision results in reduced sensitivity, reduced sexual pleasure, and adverse events, such as possible mistakes during surgery and post-operative complications. These are realistic concerns. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, 2/11/15.

Uganda – "There is a window of a few weeks after circumcision when the risk that an HIV-infected man could transmit the virus to a female partner actually increases," said Aaron Tobian, MD, PhD. Tobian, AAR, Kigozi G, Manucci J, et al. HIV Shedding from Male Circumcision Wounds in HIV-infected Men: A Prospective Cohort Study. *PLOS Medicine*. 2015;12(4): e1001820 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001820.

Parents protested the circumcision of their underage children attending Oderai Primary School in Soroti District. At least 25 pupils were circumcised without parental consent. Spokeswoman Harriet Amuat insisted they were carrying out a government program. www.monitor.co.ug, 9/19/15.

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales – Gordon Myers, 50, addressed the Royal Commission about Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse alleging his penis was cut off by a male staff member at Daruk Training School in Windsor, a boys' home to hundreds of state wards from 1960-1991. Myers says he was raped and bashed by various staff on a regular basis over the five years he lived there. He said the staff member "didn't like little boys with foreskins" and performed illegal and botched circumcision on the boys. "I had just turned 13. He took me into the clinic and said 'we have permission to circumcise you.' I said 'no you don't.' He knocked me out with a needle and I woke up in the middle of it...I screamed in pain." Myers was taken to Windsor Hospital where a surgeon "sewed his penis back on." His hospital records cannot be located. www.jews.com.au. 12/17/15.

In November 2015, the Supreme Court of NSW found a Bohra mother, a retired nurse, and a senior clergy member guilty of carrying out genital cutting on two sisters, 6 and 7 years old. Three months later, in a landmark verdict by an Australian court, community authorities issued a notice to the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community to obey the law and stop the practice of khatna (FGM). <http://scroll.in/article/80399>.

CHINA

A Chinese-made circumcision device, approved by the WHO, has been used to circumcise more than 600,000 male adults, adolescents, and young boys in both China and Africa. Traditionally, circumcision is not commonly practiced in China, so this is a product that may not be flying off the shelves, within its borders at least. "China's most unpopular invention? WHO approves disposable circumcision device." www.asiancorrespondent.com, 6/21/15.

GERMANY

Dr. Peter Liedgens, director of Elisabeth Hospital, has convinced most of his patients to rethink circumcision. "Our surgeons are arguing from a medical standpoint according to the new medical guidelines of the German Society of Pediatric Surgeons, who recommend to perform circumcision only for medical reasons," according to Thomas Kalhöfer. The hospital's policy has been in place since the beginning of the year. *There is no reason from a medical point of view to remove an intact foreskin from underage boys or boys unable to give consent.* – The German Pediatric Association, 2012. *Jerusalem Post*, 7/22/15.

STOPIGM.org – The Nuremberg State Court issued a first decision in the "Hermaphrodite Lawsuit, ruling the Erlangen University Clinic pay damages and compensation to Michaela "Micha" Raab for non-consensual IGM treatments, including partial clitoral amputation, castration, and imposition of hormones. This is the second case worldwide of a verdict against perpetrators of intersex genital mutilations, and the first time an institution was found liable. www.Zwischengeschlecht.org, 12/20/15.

IRAN

The first study of FGM in Iran found the practice being carried out in at least four major provinces. The government, wary of inciting anti-Shia sentiment among the country's Suni minority, is largely quiet. *www.IranPressNews.com*, 8/9/15.

ISRAEL

Jerusalem – Urologists at Hadessah Medical Center successfully reattached part of a baby's penis following circumcision. Evidently, the mohel cut the urethra along with the foreskin. The baby will need at least one more surgery, according to pediatric urologist, Dr. Guy Hidas. *www.israelhayom.com*, 4/2/15/.

MALI

Mali aims to reduce FGM prevalence rates for girls of 0-14 years and ensure that at least 95% of identified cases of complications receive the necessary support and services. *Demographic Health Surveys reveals state of FGM campaign*, 5/14/15.

MALTA

Malta has become the world's first country to ban gender "normalising" surgeries on intersex children before they are able to consent—or refuse consent—to the procedure. Section 15 of the new Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act makes it unlawful for a medical professional to conduct any sex reassignment treatment, including surgical intervention, on a minor if the procedure can be deferred until the person to be treated can provide informed consent. Maltese authorities and medical professionals now intend to develop guidelines to ensure any surgery or medical interventions that do take place are medically necessary and not "driven by social factors without the consent of the minor." The Act also strengthens non-discrimination provisions for transgender people, including by granting the right to every person to have their gender changed in the records of the Public Register. *CRIN*, 4/9/15.

MEXICO

Saltillo – Medical students partly cut off a baby's penis, confusing it with the umbilical cord. Doctors quickly and secretly tried to cover up the situation, rushing the baby into surgery. They told the father, Diego Rangal Izaguirre, that his son suffered a minor accident. When the surgeon started sewing the penis, he created two new deep injuries. The boy's mother, Zulema Conteras, wondered why students were allowed to cut her son. The couple made an official complaint to the hospital. *www.dailymail.co.uk*, 7/17/15.

NEW GUINEA

Papua – Citizen and church leaders rejected a local hospital policy of circumcising boys and men to help curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. The predominantly Christian population believes God's creation must not be altered and that it is done by Muslims not Christians. *Jakarta Post*, 11/25/15.

NEW ZEALAND

Waikato – Waikato Hospital Services Director Brett Paradine said policy does *not* allow pediatric surgeons to perform circumcisions for religious or cultural reasons. Since the strict criteria for publicly-funded circumcision there are fewer circumcisions. *Waikato Times*, 9/1/15.

SWEDEN

Stockholm – Karolinska Hospital Reconstructive Surgery resident Hannes Sigurjónsson successfully reconstructed a clitoris for the first time in Sweden's medical history. Sigurjónsson learned the method in France, where 5,000 women have had their vulva restored. There are 38,000 females in Sweden suffering from FGM, 7,000 are children. *www.vice.com*, 2/4/15.

SWITZERLAND

Geneva – For the first time ever, at the 68th CRC session, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child tackled intersex and IGM practices. In a groundbreaking move, the chair grilled the Swiss Government, labeling non-consensual intersex surgery "an issue of physical integrity," "a kind of violence to children," and "a harmful practice." For 22 years, intersex people have been fighting surgical "genital corrections on children with variations of sex anatomy," which they criticize as Intersex Genital Mutilations (IGM). For 16 years, they have invoked the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. Since 2008 survivors engage with the UN and since 2012 with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Now, 13 UN bodies as well as the Council of Europe are criticizing non-consensual genital surgery and other medically unnecessary interventions on intersex children. *www.timesofmalta.com*. 2/22/15.

The UN Committee Against Torture published its Concluding Observations, issuing strong recommendations on intersex and IGM practices for Austria, Denmark, Hong Kong, and China, urging states to (a) Take necessary measures to guarantee respect for the physical integrity and autonomy of intersex persons and ensure no one is subjected during infancy or childhood to unnecessary medical or surgical procedures; (b) Guarantee counseling services for all intersex children and their parents, to inform them of the consequences of unnecessary surgery and other medical treatment; (c) Ensure that full, free, and informed consent is respected in connection with medical and surgical treatments for intersex persons and that non-urgent, irreversible medical interventions are postponed until a child is sufficiently mature to participate in decision-making and give full, free, and informed consent; (d) Provide adequate redress for the physical and psychological suffering caused by such practices to intersex persons. *StopIGM.org*, 12/9/15.

During its 71st Session, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expertly questioned Ireland over non-consensual medically unnecessary, irreversible, cosmetic genital surgeries and other harmful treatments of intersex children, aimed at "correcting" their "atypical" reproductive anatomies. The Irish delegation repeatedly denied the accusations but, in the end, Minister Dr. James Reilly, referring to his own

experience as a medical doctor, inadvertently confirmed such treatments. The CRC also expertly investigated IGM in France, a state party infamous for advocating and perpetrating IGM practices internationally. A stern reprimand is expected to be issued. www.StopIGM.org, 2/3/16.

For the first time, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reprimanded two States over IGM practices and once again recognized non-consensual, medically unnecessary, irreversible, cosmetic genital surgeries and other procedures on intersex children as a "harmful practice" and as "violence against children." The Committee specifically called on Ireland to "adopt legal provisions in order to provide redress to victims of such treatment, including inadequate compensation," and for France invoked the Joint General Comment No. 18 (2014) and No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on harmful practices. *StopIGM.org*, 2/5/16.

While the UN and the US are accelerating their voluntary medical male circumcision-to-prevent-HIV/AIDS agenda in Africa, the UN fights to end FGM in Africa by 2030. www.un.org and www.voanews.com.

UNITED KINGDOM

London – In a landmark ruling, the first of its type, Mr. Justice Holman banned a father from going to his daughters' home to prevent him from taking the girls, 6, 9, and 12, to Nigeria for FGM. The father was also banned from encouraging others to harm the three girls and ordered him not to go within 100 meters of their school. The girls' mother told the court about her own mutilation in a statement, "Just before the wedding the respondent's family forced me to undergo genital circumcision. My clitoris and labia were removed. I did not want the procedure but had no choice. I have since suffered terrible pain from my injury. It has never properly healed. After intercourse the wound usually opens again." She told how the father, from whom she is divorced, "beat her and the children using weapons such as belts." The judge said, "It is clear there is potentially a very high risk of this procedure being inflicted on one or more of these girls if they are not protected and made safe to the maximum extent possible." *Evening Standard*, 7/30/15.

Nottingham – Dr. Balvinder Mahat faced police inquiry after he performed a circumcision on a 3-month-old baby without the mother's consent. The 26-year-old mother who is not married to the father knew he wanted to circumcise the boy but had been told that it couldn't be done without her signature, so she allowed her baby to spend the last night of Ramadan with his father and was horrified when she realized what had been done. www.dailymail.co.uk, 8/2/15.

The law designed to protect 10,000 girls from FGM has saved fewer than 38 children. An investigation found that the majority of local authorities and police forces have not followed the policy that can force parents to surrender travel documents of girls identified at risk of being taken abroad before the cutting season during school holidays. Nimco Ali, founder of *Daughters of Eve*, said that migrant groups

should not be allowed to police themselves because too many people in certain communities are being given too much leeway to protect girls when they are the ones profiting from FGM! *Times*, 1/27/16.

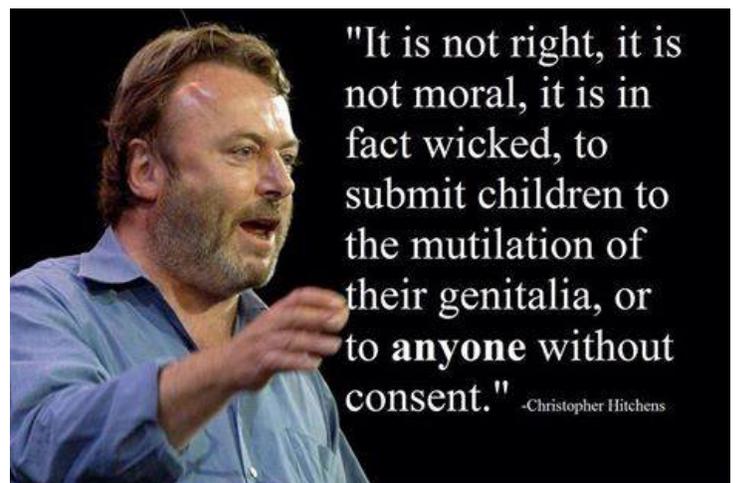
Southampton – Dr. Mohammed Siddiqui, 49, had an unregistered mobile circumcision service as a sideline between June 2012 and November 2013. He failed to wear gloves or carry resuscitation equipment, leaving one baby suffering a seizure and one boy who woke up screaming in agony during the surgery because the anesthetic had worn off, yet Siddiqui continued cutting. A Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service found 69 allegations proved true and Siddiqui was branded as a risk to patients. He was struck off the medical register and has resigned from the NHS. *Daily Mail*, 2/5/16.

UNITED STATES

At least 200 million girls and women have undergone ritual cutting, half of them living in just three countries, according to a new publication by UNICEF in NY. In the analysis of 30 countries, statistics show women in Indonesia, Egypt, and Ethiopia account for half of the FGM survivors worldwide. Somalia has the highest prevalence, with 98% of the female population having been cut. www.unicef.org.

Young Jewish parents in the US are questioning circumcision. Articles have appeared in a variety of Jewish papers, websites, and blogs. Jewish parents are working with supportive Jewish clergy to create ritual alternatives. Mark Reiss, MD, a Jewish doctor, manages a list of more than 130 rabbis, cantors, and other Jewish leaders all over the world, including the US, UK, and Israel, who officiate at Jewish covenant ceremonies without circumcision. Rebecca Wald and Lisa Braver Moss wrote *Celebrating Brit Shalom*, the first Jewish guidebook for Jewish families keeping their sons intact. <http://jewishbusinessnews.com>, 2/19/16.

According to US ambassador to Botswana, Earl Miller, "The US government is supporting Botswana with \$5 million to conduct the Accelerated Safe Male Circumcision Campaign which was launched on 8/10 at Maun." The campaign aims at circumcising 35,000 men between 15 and 29 years in six months time. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has been working in partnership with Botswana for 12 years. www.15square.org.uk, 10/17/15.



Announcements

2016 Genital Integrity Awareness Week

23rd Annual Demonstration & March
Against Infant Circumcision
US Capitol, March 28 - April 3, 2016
See www.sicsociety.org for details.

World Wide Day of Genital Autonomy

May 7th, 2016
The 4th anniversary of the
"Cologne Ruling"
granting boys the right to
self-determination
will be celebrated around the world.

Books & More...

Celebrating Brit Shalom. Lisa Braver Moss and Rebecca Wald. 2015. Notim Press, Oakland, CA. ISBN: 13:978-0692353332.

Conscientious Objection to Non-Therapeutic Genital Cutting of Children: A Guide for Nurses, Employers, and Educators. Nurses for the Rights of the Child pamphlet. 2015.
www.childrightsnurses.org.

Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy in the United States: A History of a Medical Treatment. Sarah B. Rodriguez. 2014. University of Rochester Press. ISBN: 9781580464987. www.urpress.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=14559.

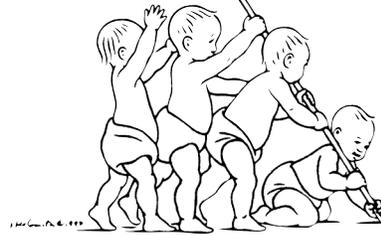
For Parents Who Regret Circumcising a Son. Gillian Longley, RN, BSN, MSS. www.ColoradoNOCIRC.org.

The Foreskin and Why You Should Keep It. Samuel M. Carnes. 2015. ISBN 13:1522747850. <https://www.createspace.com/5859831> or www.amazon.com/Foreskin-Why-You-Should-Keep/dp/1522747850/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1453209211&sr=8-1&keywords=samuel+carnes.

The Good Mommy's Guide to Her Little Boy's Penis. Adrienne Carmack, MD. 2015. ISBN 978-9903060-3-0.

GoodSearch.com (for searching the web) and **GoodShop.com** (for shopping) donate up to 20% of your purchase to NOCIRC.

International Child for Genital Autonomy lapel pin, \$8ppd from NOCIRC. The International Child for Genital Autonomy is the logo of Genital Autonomy and the International Symposia on



"Victorious Babies" by Alex Steelsmith

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Websites & More

Association contre la Mutilation des Enfants

<http://ame.enfant.org.free.fr/infos.html>

Attorneys for the Rights of the Child

www.arclaw.org

Bay Area Intactivists

bayareaintactivists.org

Beyond the Bris

www.beyondthebris.com/

Bloodstained Men & Their Friends

www.facebook.com/BloodstainedMenTheirFriends

Bonobo3D

www.youtube.com/bonobo3d

Canadian Foreskin Awareness Project

www.can-fap.net

Catholics Against Circumcision

www.catholicsagainstcircumcision.org

Celebrants of Brit Shalom

www.circumstitions.com/Jewish-shalom.html

Circumcision and HIV

www.dontgetstuck.wordpress.com
www.circumcisionandhiv.com

Circumcision Decision Maker

www.circumcisiondecisionmaker.com

Circumcision Information and Resource Pages

www.cirp.org

Circumcision Information Australia

www.circinfo.org

Circumcision Resource Center

www.circumcision.org

Doctors Opposing Circumcision

www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org

Dr. Momma

www.DrMomma.org

Genital Autonomy

www.genitalautonomy.org
www.GAAmerica.org

Global Survey of Circumcision Harm

www.circumcisionharm.org/

Intact America

www.IntactAmerica.org
www.facebook.com/IntactAmerica/

Intact Denmark

www.intactdenmark.wordpress.com/
Intaction

Intaction

www.intaction.org

Intactivism Pages

www.circumstitions.com

Intact News

www.intactnews.org

MGM Bill to End MGM in the US

www.mgmbill.org

Men Do Complain

www.mendocomplain.com

NOCIRC

www.nocirc.org
www.youtube.com/nocirc

NOCIRC of Norway

www.nocirc.no/

NOCIRC of South Africa

www.nocirc-sa.co.za/

NOCIRC of South Korea

www.pop119.com

NOHARM (National Organization to Halt the Routine Mutilation of Males)

www.noharm.org

NORM (National Organization of Restoring Men)

www.norm.org

NORM-UK

www.norm-uk.org

Nurses for the Rights of the Child

www.nurses.cirp.org

Taylor's Ridged Band

<http://research.cirp.org>

The Whole Network

www.thewholenetwork.org

The 14th International Symposium on Genital Autonomy and Children's Rights Genital Autonomy 2016

*Changing Global Perceptions:
Child Protection & Bodily Integrity*

14 - 16 September 2016
Keele University
Keele, Staffordshire, UK

For more information about this symposium,
see: www.GenitalAutonomy.org/events

Genital Autonomy exists as a charity to promote, preserve, and protect the health and wellbeing of male, female, and intersex children by protecting them from unnecessary genital surgery or modification; and to promote human rights of children in relation to genital surgery or modification as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child throughout the world.

The National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (NOCIRC) has changed its name to Genital Autonomy - America. We join an international effort, including Genital Autonomy in the UK, as well as GA-Finland, GA-Canada, and Australasian Institute for Genital Autonomy, to work on protecting the genital rights of all children. For more more information about this, see Letter From the Editor on page 2.

Publisher: National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (NOCIRC), now known as Genital Autonomy - America (GA-America).

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