

Oregon Supreme Court: Boy Has a Say in Circumcision Decision

The Oregon Supreme Court on January 25th reversed trial and appellate court decisions in the *Boldt v. Boldt* case, in which a recently converted Jewish father wants his 12-year-old son to be circumcised against the mother's wishes, and returned the case to the trial court to determine the boy's wishes. Will the trial court protect the boy's right to genital integrity until he reaches the age of majority and can make a well-informed, non-coerced decision for himself? The father has appealed the Supreme Court's decision.

Dad Accused of Circumcising Sons

Johnny Eric Marlowe was charged with two counts of felony child abuse in Caldwell County, NC, in January, for circumcising two infant sons with a utility knife. The babies were born at home, four months apart, to his legal wife and another woman living in the home.

Some Reported Circumcision Deaths

A 7-day-old baby, taken to a hospital after circumcision at Golders Green Synagogue in North London, died from cardiac arrest and oxygen starvation. *www.mirror.co.uk*, 2/15/07.

A 7-day-old infant died from urinary obstruction caused by a PlastiBell circumcision ring. Members of the Pediatric Death Review Committee of the Ontario Chief Coroner's Office were aware of circumcision complications at their institutions, including necrosis of the glans, transfusions, buried penis, PlastiBell ring retention, slipped ring (causing penile tourniquet), and meatal obstruction due to misplaced PlastiBell ring. None were reported in the medical literature, indicating under-reporting of serious circumcision complications. *Paediatr Child Health* 2007 April;12(4):311-12.

An 18-day-old Nigerian baby died in Tarragona after massive blood loss following circumcision thought to have been performed by the baby's mother. *Thinkspain.com*, 11/22/07.

Ten-year-old Kuldeep Kumar Vishnubhai Patel died two hours after being circumcised. *Express India*, 11/19/07.

Warning to Parents

Parents of an intact boy often know more about the development and care of a normal penis than their son's doctor, who may still not know the foreskin and glans separate naturally on their own and should be allowed to do so. The average age for the foreskin to become retractable is 10.4 years! By age 18, most foreskins retract. Be sure to tell your son's doctor, *before* every examination, that s/he can look at but may *not* touch your son's penis. Then, watch closely to ensure your wishes are respected. Both NOCIRC and Doctors Opposing Circumcision receive many calls from parents who told the pediatrician not to retract their child's foreskin, only to have the pediatrician retract it anyway.

Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Threat to Circumcised Boys

MRSA, the "superbug," can cause organ failure after reaching the blood stream. The immature immune system of infants and children and invasive procedures, such as circumcision, increase the risk of MRSA. Circumcised boys are at 12-times-greater risk of acquiring MRSA than intact boys.

Australian Medical Association Backs Law to Ban Circumcision

Tasmania's Children's Commissioner, Paul Mason, says non-medical circumcision is a breach of human rights. "[E]veryone is entitled to equal protection under the law, regardless of gender, culture, or race." AMA's Tasmanian President, Haydn Walters, says they would support a ban on the practice, except when there is a rare medical need." *ABC News*, 9/12/07.

African AIDS Badly Overblown, UN Confesses

The UN cut 7 million from its global AIDS total; new HIV infections, slowing for a decade, are down 40%. The worldwide HIV total, estimated a year ago at nearly 40 million and rising, is now reported as 33 million. *Science Guardian*, 11/20/07.

Circumcision Does Not Affect HIV in US Men

Black and Latino men are just as likely to become infected with the AIDS virus, whether circumcised or not, Gregorio A. Millet, MPH, of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found. The findings of this study should come as no surprise, with the US's high rates of both circumcision and AIDS. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 12/15/07.

Wives More Likely to Contract HIV from Circumcised Husbands

In a 2-year study, wives of circumcised men were 58% more likely to contract HIV than wives of intact men. The study, presented at the February Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston, was carried out in Uganda. Principal investigator, Maria Wawer said the results were "unexpected and somewhat disappointing" and posed a challenge to mass male circumcision in Africa.

AIDS Vaccine Increases Risk for Intact Males

The Merck ad5 candidate AIDS vaccine increased the vulnerability of intact men to infection because it abrogated an immune mechanism in the foreskin that normally protects against infection through the mucosa of the foreskin. Langerin, secreted by Langerhans cells in the foreskin, is said to do just that. [See *Langerhans Cells*, page 5.]

Letter from the Editor

We have had a very busy year dealing with the vast media coverage of three African HIV/AIDS studies, rapidly followed by plans to implement circumcision of African males. Immediately, the idea of circumcising gay and minority males in America was promoted, and there was even talk about circumcising babies as a way to stop the spread of AIDS. The studies were conducted by people already promoting circumcision. The extensive media coverage now has people worldwide talking about circumcision, and many are standing up to say that this "circumcision-to-prevent HIV/AIDS" agenda is nonsense and nothing more than the latest excuse to promote circumcision. The dissenters—those who recognize the researcher bias, stilted studies, and dangerous agenda—include the presidents of France and Uganda and the Health Secretaries of Brazil and Belarus, who have voiced concerns about this dangerous plot. Young American parents realize there are safer, less expensive ways to prevent AIDS—abstinence, being faithful, and condom use. Common sense tells us this is so. Education is key.

The high rate of HIV in Africa is primarily due to lack of education, lower socio-economic status, and concurrent-sex-partner promiscuity, not lack of circumcision. A circumcision costs between \$54 and \$74 dollars in Africa, while condoms cost 2-2.5¢ each. Condoms obviously are cheaper and safer than circumcision.

Circumcision often causes the spread of HIV in Africa. African males who are circumcised will suffer pain, harm, and loss without gaining protection. Many will think they are protected or refuse to use condoms because of decreased sensitivity. What will be their recourse when the plan fails? Africans, already sensitive to colonial exploitation, are likely to feel abused and the inevitable failure of the ill-conceived plan will be devastating. People will come to realize the plot was futile from the onset. As George Orwell said, "Sooner or later a false belief bumps up against solid reality, usually on a battlefield." So, if Gandhi was right when he said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win!" we're on that battlefield now and we're getting closer to our goal.

Those who promote circumcision have used one erroneous fear-based excuse after another to support genital cutting. Today, however, a very real and present danger has emerged: methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), what the media refers to as the "superbug." MRSA is no longer found just in hospitals, now it's in the community, and healthcare workers and parents carry it back into the newborn nursery.¹ It is a dangerous pathogen that can and does cause death.² Circumcised boys have a 12-times greater risk of acquiring MRSA than intact boys because the open circumcision wound allows a place of entry into the body.³ MRSA is a far greater threat to newborn boys than HIV/AIDS, so parents who keep their son intact are helping to protect him from MRSA. In addition, these parents will have years in which to teach their son how to protect himself from HIV/AIDS.

This year, the American Academy of Pediatrics has assembled yet another Task Force Committee on Circumcision, as it continues to struggle with the emotional issues of its circumcised male doctors, conflicts of interest, and internal dissension.⁴ Will the Task Force promote the circumcision-to-prevent HIV/AIDS myth or education about safe sex and condom use? Will the task force warn parents about the threat of MRSA to baby boys? Will the Task Force finally acknowledge that America squanders \$1.2 billion⁵ of healthcare funds on an injurious operation⁶ detrimental to child health,⁷ as America continues to experience an unseemly and shocking rate of infant mortality? Will the task force adopt international human rights law and international medical ethics⁸ for its guidance? Will the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Circumcision recognize and protect the genital integrity rights of infant American boys? Ethically speaking, isn't it about time it did?



1. Bratu S, Eramo A, Kopec R, et al. Community-associated methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in hospital nursery and maternity units. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2005;11(6): Available from www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol11no06/04-0885.htm
2. Cosgrove SE, Sakoulas G, Perencevich EN, et al. Comparison of mortality associated with methicillin-resistant and methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteremia; a meta-analysis. *Clin Infect Dis* 2003;36:53-9.
3. Nguyen DM, Bancroft E, Mascola L, et al. Risk factors for neonatal methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infection in a well-infant nursery. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007;28(4):406-11.
4. Goldman R. Circumcision policy: a psychosocial perspective. *Paediatr Child Health* 2004;9(9):630-3.
5. Hill G. The case against circumcision. *J Mens Health Gend* 2007;4(3):318-23.
6. Taylor JR, Lockwood AP, Taylor AJ. The prepuce: specialized mucosa of the penis and its loss to circumcision. *Br J Urol* 1996;77:291-5.
7. Van Howe RS. A cost-utility analysis of neonatal circumcision. *Med Decis Making* 2004;24:584-601.
8. UNESCO. Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. Adopted by the UNESCO General Conference, 19 October 2005.

At the moment, the enthusiasm for male circumcision is proffered to displace the disappointment of previous 'silver' or 'magic' bullets that have not worked as well as we had hoped. It is a dreadful pandemic, to be sure; but that does not mean we should lose sight of the fact that care, judgement, experience and knowledge are required before action. Evidence is but one form of this, and the determination not to harm others through haste or expedience must prevail.

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Reproductive Health Matters 2007;15(29):33-44

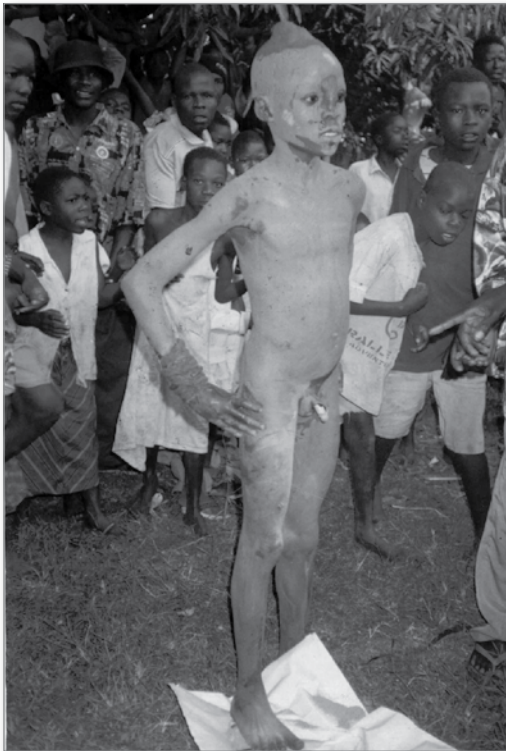
Letters to the Editor

"In 1942, I volunteered for the British Royal Air Force. We trainees were lectured by an RAF physician on venereal disease prevention. An excellent preventive technique, as soon as possible after a questionable sexual interaction and repeating the procedure often, is to hold the foreskin tight and urinate, allowing the foreskin to balloon out for as long as possible. Advice taken, I subsequently enjoyed, over the years in many different countries, dubious sexual encounters without any health consequences whatsoever. In 1959, however, while unconscious in a US hospital and *without my permission*, I was circumcised. Within a short time, I contracted chlamydia because the urine technique was no longer available to me." *Personal correspondence.*

"I cannot tell you enough how much I am glad your organization exists and for what it does. I was not circumcised in 1944 because I was born premature and our family physician felt I would not have survived the procedure. So I grew up with an intact penis, not knowing there was such a procedure as circumcision. It was not until I was 4-years-old, when my mother forced me to watch my baby brother undergo a circumcision on our kitchen table. My little brother screamed in an uncontrollable way, making me wonder why my parents would allow this kind of thing to happen to a helpless child. As I recall, there was blood and scissors and I am sure no local anesthetic was used. My brother survived this traumatic event, but I did not. The emotional scar is with me to this day...This is the first time in my life I said this to anybody. Thanks for giving me some sort of outlet to be at peace with myself." *Personal correspondence.* 3/11/07.

"I'm 22 and my generation lives in the information age and are now able to realize the harmful effects of circumcision. Things like *youtube* and *googlevideo* also show how barbaric the procedure is. I'm currently dealing with the psychological impact of feeling punished and betrayed by my own parents and undergoing foreskin restoration to get a little back of what was permanently removed without my consent. Thanks for all the work you guys are doing to help inform my generation and future generations so we can bury this in history books." *Personal correspondence.* 7/5/07.

"I write as a 68-year-old man, circumcised at age 65. I cannot stress enough how vastly diminished the sensitivity is for a man circumcised three years ago. The difference is like night and day. What concerns me deeply is the published comments that downplay the terrific difference in sensation, which does nothing to discourage people from circumcising. One study apparently measured the difference in the glans between circ'd vs intact men. That is only part of the sensation story! What should be measured is the sensitivity of the (inner) foreskin. That is where the most erogenous tissue lies. Over time, the circumcised glans becomes like a piece of wood. I am not exaggerating when I say this. Please know that there is a circ'd man in Maine who lived intact for 65 years who would add fuel to your anti-circ fire at any time and who certainly understands the circ vs intact sensitivity as well as anyone could." *Personal correspondence.* 8/11/07.



"The Luo Council of Elders' stand is that male circumcision is not their culture and it should not be imposed upon them as way to prevent HIV. Too, they say there is no scientific evidence that male circumcision is an effective way of preventing HIV. They claim there is no significant difference in HIV rates between communities that circumcise and those that do not, and the crucial component in HIV acquisition and transmission is not the presence of a foreskin but the absence of a condom and associated ignorance. They ask why the Luyiah community, where 100% of males are circumcised, die of AIDS. As an organization in the field of health and human rights, we support Luos and others against this faulty research and the national policy the government intends to pass to cut all male children. This policy would deny communal and individual rights. People would be beaten and face forced cutting. We are working with Luos and others to create community sensitization. We need funds for regional workshops, community rallies, and publicity. We are sending a photo to create interest and support for our work." *Hillary Maloba, personal communication,* 11/20/07. [If you'd like to help Ms. Maloba's efforts, please contact NOCIRC.]

GERMANY

Frankfurt – A regional appeals court found circumcision of an 11-year-old Muslim boy without his approval an unlawful personal injury, saying the decision is a “central right of a person to determine his identity and life.” Opening the way for financial compensation, the boy, now 14, plans to sue his father. *JTA*, 9/21/07.

MALAYSIA

Klang, Selangor – Circumcision for a urinary tract infection proved fatal for 3-year-old Nui Jia Yuan, who failed to regain consciousness and died. The Sessions Court awarded a large compensation to the boy’s family; the parents were not content. “This money will not bring my son back,” said the boy’s mother, Lim Mei Leng, 33. *The New Straits Times Press*, 10/14/07.

UNITED STATES

Fulton County, GA – David H. Cornell, MD, is being sued for allegedly negligently performed adult circumcisions that resulted in serious injury. The cases pending in the State Court of Fulton County are: *Evans v. David H. Cornell, MD, LLC dba The Circumcision Center, et al.*, and *Newton v. David H. Cornell, MD, LLC dba The Circumcision Center, et al.* David J. Llewellyn, Esq. and Michael L. Neff, Esq. of Atlanta, Georgia represent Mr. Evans, and Mr. Llewellyn represents Mr. Newton.

An infant who permanently lost a significant portion of his glans penis in a Mogen clamp circumcision has brought suit through his mother for medical malpractice. *D. P., Jr. v. Haiba Sonyika, MD, et al.*, State Court of Fulton County, GA. David J. Llewellyn, Esq., Roderick E. Edmond, Esq., and Craig T. Jones, Esq. of Atlanta represent the plaintiffs.

Matoon, IL – A case was filed 7/18/07 in the Circuit Court of Coles County on behalf of a baby boy whose entire glans was amputated on 2/15/07 at Sarah Bush Hospital by Dr. Sherif Malek, using a Mogen clamp. At 6 months, the baby had penile skin transfer surgery and will need additional surgery at puberty. *News.findlaw.com*, 7/18/07

Fridley, MN – “Federal regulations specifically state that before any surgery takes place, there has to be a signed informed consent in the patient’s chart,” according to Zenas Baer, attorney for Dawn and David Nelson, whose son was circumcised in 2000 by Dr. Steven Berestka, and who did not consult either

parent before the surgery. The court rejected the mother’s suit, saying she had indicated on a form during a prenatal appointment that the baby should be circumcised. The case will be appealed. 2/5/08.

Minneapolis, MN – Judges on the 8th US Circuit Court of Appeals sent an asylum case back to the immigration judges for additional proceedings. Olivia Kipkemboi, 34, appealed the Board of Immigration’s denial of asylum because her husband’s family wanted her circumcised and, should she and their daughter return to Kenya, they both would be forcibly circumcised. *news24.com*, 1/24/07.

Brooklyn, NY – A Brooklyn urologist is being sued by a patient who alleges that a botched circumcision ruined his life, and his sex life. The plaintiff was seen for “balanitis and phimosis that was causing discomfort to the head of his penis.” The doctor performed what the patient’s attorneys allege was a circumcision “done improperly” and “caused the plaintiff injury” and to “suffer emotional and physical injury which will continue into the future and plague him for the rest of his life.” Names were withheld because of the sensitive issue.

Stanley County, NC – A suit was filed against a physician who allegedly severed a significant portion of the glans penis of an infant while performing a Mogen clamp circumcision. Although the severed portion was reattached, the plaintiffs claim the child suffered serious permanent injuries. *Glenn v. James Chaang Lin, MD, et al.*, in the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division, Stanley County, North Carolina. Jason E. Taylor, Esq. and William K. Goldfarb, Esq. of Charlotte, NC, and David J. Llewellyn, Esq. of Atlanta, GA, represent the plaintiffs.

Portland, OR – The Supreme Court of the State of Oregon re *Boldt v. Boldt*: “The decision of the Court of Appeals is reversed. The supplemental judgment of the circuit court is reversed. The case is remanded to the circuit court for further proceedings.” [More on page 1.] www.publications.ojd.state.or.us/SOS54714.htm.

Morgantown, WV – A WV couple filed a medical malpractice lawsuit in Monongalia Circuit Court, alleging their son was injured at the WV University Medical Corporation and has required medical care as a result of the 2005 circumcision. *US World News*, 4/18/08.

Medical Literature Highlights

BIOETHICS AND IMMIGRATION

“[A] serious and thorough debate is necessary in Italy (and perhaps in other European countries facing Muslim immigration), in order to clarify the different positions and to help bioethics to find solutions (even arbitration agreements) to the subtle inter-ethnic problems that the whole developed world is at present facing. Viviani F, Malaguti S, Grassivaro Gallo P. Bioethics and Immigration: The Case of Male Ritual Circumcision in Italy. *International Journal of Migration and Transcultural Medicine* 4:210-217, 2007.

THE CASE AGAINST CIRCUMCISION

“The case in favor of male circumcision is based on specious literature largely created to satisfy the emotional compulsions of wounded circumcised men. Similarly, the position statements of medical societies (frequently written by circumcised men) are biased in favor of circumcision. Claimed health benefits are illusory and do not offset the proven risks, complications, and disadvantages that exceed any claimed benefits. On close analysis, there is *no* case for non-therapeutic or prophylactic circumcision.” George

Hill. The case against circumcision. *jmhg* 4(3):318-323, September 2007.

CIRCUMCISION COMPLICATIONS

"We report the findings of 48 cases referred for serious complications after circumcision that needed secondary surgical interventions." Ceylan K, *et al.* Severe complications of circumcision: An analysis of 48 cases, *Doi:10.101/j.jurol.200.02.009*.

GENERATIVE ULCERATIVE DISEASE

"Significant between-study heterogeneity and evidence of publication bias exclude the possibility of reaching a definitive conclusion regarding the association of circumcision status and these sexually transmitted infections." Van Howe RS. Genital ulcerative disease and sexually transmitted urethritis and circumcision: a meta-analysis. *Int J STD AIDS* 2007 Dec;18(12):799-809.

HIV AND CIRCUMCISION

"HIV transmission may occur through circumcision-related blood exposures in eastern and southern Africa." Brewer DD, Potterat JJ, Roberts JM Jr, Brody S. Male and female circumcision associated with prevalent HIV infection in virgins and adolescents in Kenya, Lesotho, and Tanzania. *Ann Epidemiol* 2007 Mar;17(3):217-26.

LANGERHANS CELLS PROTECT AGAINST HIV-1

"Human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) is primarily transmitted sexually...Langerin is a natural barrier to HIV-1 infection, and strategies to combat infection must enhance, preserve or, at the very least, not interfere with Langerin expression and function." Lot de Witte, *et al.* Langerin is a natural barrier to HIV-1 transmission by Langerhans cells. *Nature Medicine*, published online 4 March 2007; doi:10.1038/nm1541.

"Langerhans cells in the skin and mucosa have been thought to mediate the spread of HIV-1 in the body during sexual transmission. Instead, it seems that the cells protect against the virus, a finding with implications for the development of microbicides." Olivier Schwartz. Langerhans cells lap up HIV-1. *Nature Medicine* 13(3):245-246, March 2007.

NEONATAL MRSA

"Circumcision is a possible explanation for the recent [MRSA] outbreaks." Van Howe, RS and Robson, WLM. The Possible Role of Circumcision in Newborn Outbreaks of Community-Associated Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Clinical Pediatrics* 2007, *online.sagepub.com*.

"Reports have indicated that community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) strains are capable of infecting otherwise healthy infants in hospital nurseries...*S. aureus* has been associated with prolonged hospital length of stay, delivery by cesarean section, and history of plastic-bell circumcision...As the prevalence of CA-MRSA strains increases in the community, it will become more difficult to prevent outbreaks...Educating staff, patients, visitors, and *mohels* about infections with CA-MRSA strains will improve disease

recognition and outbreak detection." Nguyen DM, *et al.* Risk Factors for Neonatal Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Infection in a Well-Infant Nursery. *Infec Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007; 28:406-411.

PENILE AMPUTATION

"Shaeer's A-Y plasty" is capable of restoring the native phallus following amputation, with preservation of both gender identity and physiological characteristics of the penis to a large extent." Shaeer O. Restoration of the Penis Following Amputation at Circumcision: Shaeer's A-Y Plasty. *J Sex Med*. 2007 Dec 14.

PENILE INFLAMMATION

"Rather than protecting against penile inflammation, neonatal circumcision increases the risk of penile inflammation, particularly in boys younger than 3 years old." Van Howe RS. Neonatal circumcision and penile inflammation in young boys. *Clin Pediatr (Phila)* 2007; 46: 329-33.

PENILE SENSITIVITY AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION

"Circumcision ablates the most sensitive parts of the penis." Sorrells ML, Snyder ML, Reiss MD, Eden C, Milos MF, Wilcox N, Van Howe RS. Fine-touch pressure thresholds in the adult penis. *BJU Int*. 2007;99:864-9.

"Twenty uncircumcised men and an equal number of age-matched circumcised participants underwent genital and nongenital sensory testing...[R]esults do not support the hypothesized penile sensory differences associated with circumcision." Payne K, Thaler L, Kukkonen T, *et al.* Sensation and Sexual Arousal in Circumcised and Uncircumcised Men. *JSexMed* 2007;4:667-674. [The most highly innervated part of the penis, the foreskin, was *not* tested!]

"Adult male circumcision does not adversely affect sexual satisfaction or clinically significant function in men." Kigozi G, Watya S, Polis CB, *et al.* The effect of male circumcision on sexual satisfaction and function, results from a randomized trial of male circumcision for human immunodeficiency virus prevention, Rakai, Uganda. *BJU International*, 9/07. [Loss of the protective covering, gliding mechanism, and 20-70,000 highly erogenous nerve endings *does* alter both function and sensation.]

"There was a decrease in couples' sexual life after circumcision indicating that adult circumcision adversely affects sexual function in many men and/or their partners, possibly because of complications of surgery and loss of nerve endings. Solinis I, Yiannaki A. Does circumcision improve couple's sexual life? *jmhg* 4(3):357-378, September 2007.

PHIMOSIS

"Our study shows that topical steroids represent a good alternative to surgery in case of phimosis." Esposito C, Centonze A, Alicchio F, *et al.* Topical steroid application versus circumcision in pediatric patients with phimosis: a prospective randomized placebo controlled clinical trial. *World J Urol*, 2007.

The present investigation adds up and supports the effectiveness of phimosis topical corticoid treatment. Nevertheless,

Medical Literature Highlights (cont.)

hygiene and preputial traction, when appropriately performed, seem to play an important role in the disappearance of the phimotic ring as well. New studies are necessary to confirm if this is true or not. Pileggi Fde O, Vicente YA. Phimotic ring topical corticoid cream (0.1% mometasone furoate) treatment in children. *J Pediatr Surg.* 2007 Oct;42(10):1749-52

PROSTITUTES AND HIV/AIDS

"[I]t is the number of infected prostitutes in a country that is highly significant and robust in explaining HIV prevalence levels across countries." John R. Talbott. Size Matters: The Number of Prostitutes and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic. *Plosone.org*, Issue 6:1-8, 1/2007, e543.

World News

AFRICA

Burkina Faso – One girl is dead and seven others were hospitalized after scores of girls between 4-14 years were circumcised, according to Aina Ouedraogo, head of a national committee against FGM, which was outlawed in 1996. The 80-year-old circumciser and relatives of the girls were arrested. *The Times*, 9/21/07.

Cameroon – The BBC World Service honored Cyril Ebie with the *Stand Up For Your Rights* award for protecting his sister from FGM. Ebie and his sister fled to a nearby city until their father summoned them 9-months later, following a plea to the Council of Elders and a ban on the practice in their village. *Awaken* 11(2):3, December 2007.

Eritrea – A ban on FGM took effect on 3/31/07, and anyone who requests, takes part in, or promotes the practice now faces a fine of several hundred dollars or up to 10 years in jail. A 2002 government survey found 62% of women were circumcised before their first birthday. More than 99% were done by traditional practitioners. *Reuters*, 4/8/07.

Kenya – The principal of Meru South's Kiriani Boys High sent home 20 students to be circumcised three days after they entered the school, saying they could not fit in "in the condition they are in." The Teachers Service Commission was called to discipline the principal. *The Standard*, 2/12/07.

Kenya has recorded a drop in FGM from a prevalence of 50% in 1999 to 34% in 2007. Cameroon is the only country in Africa that virtually wiped out FGM, down from 20% in 1999 to 1% today. *Nationmedia.com*, 11/22/07.

Violence followed Kenya's disputed presidential election as members of the Kikuyu tribe used rusty swords to circumcise members of the non-circumcising Luo tribe, males and females alike. *AP*, 1/15/08.

Nairobi – A 13-year-old boy bled to death on 12/12 after he was circumcised by a traditional attendant at home. *The Nation (Nairobi)*, 12/14/07.

Rwanda – The policy of forcing men to be circumcised in order to qualify for American funds was apparently approved by the US government. Bush's *President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief* (PEPFAR), according to Principal Deputy Coordinator, Dr. Thomas Kenyon, is prepared to provide funds to any country that is willing to undertake mass male circumcision. In Rwanda, this amounts to \$167 million. From 2000-2007, educational programs alone effectively dropped

the rate of HIV-positive adults from 11% to 3%. Still, according to Innocent Nyaruhirira, Secretary of State for AIDS prevention, "We will start this campaign with newborn and young men in universities, the army, and police." *BBC News*, 2/2/08.

Sudan – The Sudanese government introduced a bill that would ban FGM. Anyone who performs FGM would be subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years, if the victim dies. Repeat offenders will get life imprisonment. *Al-Sudani*, 12/31/07.

Uganda – President Yoweri Museveni argues that, claiming circumcision decreases the risk of AIDS, even with reckless behavior, sends a dangerous message. He said that "The way we controlled AIDS was because of an unequivocal message that there is a sickness, which is not curable, you get it through sex, and when you get it you die. Therefore, avoid all risky sexual behaviors." *allafrica.com*, 2/12/07.

The Bagishu of eastern Uganda celebrate a ritual, said to turn boys into men. Every other year, elders come together and hunt down those trying to avoid circumcision by hiding in cities. Many non-Bagishu and human rights activists complain the practice is coercive. *VOA News*, 3/25/07.

The Kasese and Bundibugyo have been asked by the Ministry of Health to suspend circumcision ceremonies until after the Ebola epidemic is contained, according to Dr. Sam Okware. The cumulative number of cases rose to 127, the death toll remained at 35. *New Vision (Kampala)*, 12/18/07.

West Africa – An African group, working to abolish FGM in West Africa, has been awarded the world's biggest prize (almost \$2 million) for humanitarian work. Tostan, an NGO with a staff of 400, uses traditional song, poetry, theater, and dance to educate people about the dangers of FGM. *BBC*, 8/13/07.

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales – "Male circumcision has no role in the Australian HIV epidemic. There is no demonstrated benefit of circumcision in men who have sex with men; correct and consistent condom use, not circumcision, is the most effective means of reducing female-to-male transmission, and vice-versa; African data on circumcision is context-specific and cannot be extrapolated to the Australian epidemic in any way." Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, Inc. *Briefing Paper*, 23 July 2007.

Sydney – Platigo Corporation was formed to develop and market the GFS product for assisting men with phimosis. The device was designed and manufactured in Australia, and is

now sold throughout the world as an easy-to-use kit. The scientists continue to innovate and improve the GFS to provide ongoing improvements to the quality of life experience for men's health. The company recently received funding for the commercialization of the device from the Department of State & Regional Development of the Government of New South Wales. gfs.platigo.com.

BELARUS

Minsk – Officials from Belarus' Ministry of Health formally rejected circumcision in the former Soviet republic to control the spread of HIV. "This is not something we are considering," said spokesman Mikahil Rizhma. "In our opinion, using a condom is much more effective." In Belarus, 1% of men are circumcised. *Earthtimes.org*, 5/18/07.

BRAZIL

The Brazilian Health Ministry technical advisor says her country will *not* begin circumcising due to what she considers misleading information. "I find the recommendations of the WHO and UN HIV/AIDS program a little surprising and even frightening," Mariangela Simao told Agencia Brasil. "This proposal gives a message of 'false protection.'" *vivirlatino.com*, 4/3/07.

CHINA

Director of the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia and the Pacific, J.V.R. Prasada Rao, expressed skepticism about the "circumcision-to-prevent HIV" plan, saying, "[T]he practice is dangerous to advocate because it is not 100% full-proof." *South China Morning Post*, 10/12/07.

ENGLAND

London – Metropolitan Police are offering €29,500/US\$40,000 for information leading to Britain's first FGM prosecution, Detective Chief Superintendent Alastair Jeffrey said. Midwife Comfort Momoh treats 400-500 FGM survivors every year at London hospitals and clinics. *AP*, 6/11/07.

EGYPT

Cairo – Egypt's state-appointed Grand Mufti said FGM was forbidden by Islam after 12-year-old Bodoor Ahmed Shaker died undergoing the procedure at a private medical clinic. *Reuters*, 6/24/07.

Gharbiya – The death of 13-year-old Karima Rahim Massud was discovered when her father sought a death certificate from another doctor. The circumcising doctor is being interrogated; his medical practice was closed. *Middle East Times*, 8/11/07.

FRANCE

Paris – "The French National AIDS Council...urged prudence in implementing male-circumcision programmes to reduce the spread of HIV. It cautioned that over-zealous roll out could lead to a false sense of security and exacerbate the problem." *Nature* 447:1040-41, 6/07.

INDIA

UNAIDS and the WHO estimated, in 2006, that 5.7 million people in India were infected with HIV. In 2007, the revised estimate was 2.5 million, a revision that reduced the estimated number of people living with HIV globally by nearly 10% and reinforcing concerns about the validity of methods for producing such statistics. Robert Steinbrook, MD. HIV in India—A Downsized Epidemic. *NEJM* 358(2):107-109, 1/10/08.

New Delhi – The Indian Council of Medical Research Task Force suggested a multi-site study to understand community comfort with male circumcision to prevent the spread of AIDS. The WHO and UNAIDS said that, in India, where HIV is concentrated in specific population groups, there would be little public health benefit in promoting male circumcision in the general population. *The Telegraph*, 1/2/08.

ISRAEL

After circumcision, parents of an 8-day-old boy called the mohel about their baby's blood-soaked diaper and were told to call an ambulance. A paramedic found the baby's foreskin and the part of his glans that was cut off, put them on ice, and took them to the hospital. The baby underwent surgery at Sheba Medical Center. The infant was suffering from hepatitis, but the parents insisted on the bris. *Ynetnews.com*, 2/5/07.

A top Israeli rabbi suffered a deep cut to his hand when the mohel's knife slipped during circumcision. The mohel's name was not released for fear of harming his business. *Jewish Telegraph*, 11/15/07.

The Tel Aviv District Court allowed the circumcision of Yigal Amir's son at Rimoni Prison, where Amir is serving a life sentence for the assassination of former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin after a peace rally. *Haaretz.com*, 11/03/07.

NORWAY

Two midwives, Eli Aaby and Ann Kristin von Ubisch, who work at Akershus University Hospital, asked Health Minister Silvia Brustad to forbid male circumcision in Norway. Irma Iverson, Ombudsman for patients in Akershus, said that Muslim boys are disabled for life in circumcisions done in private homes. Since 2004, parents must pay for it on their own. *Klassekampen*, 4/23/07.

Oslo – Norwegian-Somalian, Kadra, famous in Norway for exposing imam support of FGM, was beaten unconscious by a gang of Somali men. The Islamic Council Norway condemned the attack on Kadra and urged her to pursue the matter with police. "Behavior where one goes to physical attack on someone you disagree with violates Islamic teaching and the prophet Muhammad's sunnah (lifestyle). We strongly object to such behavior," the IRN said in a press release. 4/13/07.

PAKISTAN

Rawalpindi – A baby died in Muslim Town Police Station jurisdiction due to loss of blood after circumcision at the child's home. *Daily Times*, 7/2/07.

CONTINUES

SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town – South Africa's health minister voiced doubts about the circumcision-to-prevent-HIV studies. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang said there isn't "enough information" to justify the government circumcising local communities whose traditions frown on circumcision. She notes that South Africa's Xhosa communities suffer high rates of AIDS even though most are circumcised. Many South African leaders portray the advice about circumcision as a Western attempt to force foreign values and solutions on Africans.

Six more youths lost their penis from circumcision in the Eastern Cape, according to spokesperson Sizwe Kupelo. In Port St. Johns, 18 initiates were hospitalized, 4 after being assaulted at initiation schools. One nurse and 19 surgeons were arrested. *Mail & Guardian online*, 7/6/07.

Eastern Cape – Two more initiates died from circumcision at an illegal school in the Mthatha area. Twelve initiates have died this season. *SABC Radio*, 7/5/07.

Johannesburg – The health department's HIV/AIDS head, Dr. Nomonde Xundu responded cautiously to the UN's endorsement of male circumcision to avert HIV infection in heterosexual men. Promoting circumcision would have a limited effect because at least 40% of men in SA are already circumcised, she said. *allafrica.com*, 3/30/2007.

Three boys died after circumcision at an illegal initiation school run by a 17-year-old boy, who was arrested, along with an elderly man responsible for the mutilations and deaths, according to Sizwe Kupelo. *Sapa*, 6/23/07.

Swaziland – Teams of Israeli surgeons are circumcising Swazi men, hoping to help curb the spread of AIDS. *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 10/21/07.

SWITZERLAND

Geneva – The Swiss section of the United Nations children's organization, Unicef, is calling for FGM to be banned in Switzerland. Elsbeth Müller, director of Unicef Switzerland said, "Female circumcision is a human rights violation of a healthy body. It is mutilation and as such should not be tolerated." *swissinfo.ch*, 3/7/08.

Swiss HIV experts produced the first-ever consensus statement to say that HIV-positive individuals on effective antiretroviral therapy and without STIs are sexually non-infectious. The statement includes several exceptions and caveats, acknowledges that there are no scientific data that the risk of transmission in these circumstances is zero, and discusses implications for doctors, HIV-positive people, HIV prevention, and the legal system. *Bulletin of Swiss Medicine*, 1/30/08.

TASMANIA

Tasmania's Children's Commissioner, Paul Mason, wants the state government to ban non-medical circumcision of boys. FGM is illegal in Tasmania, and Mason said it's unfair that boys aren't given the same protection. *ABC News*, 8/13/07.

THAILAND

Thailand's condom czar and patron saint of prevention programs received the \$1 million Gates Award for Global Health on behalf of a group that slashed HIV infection rates in Southeast Asia. Mechai Viravaidya's initial forays into Bangkok's red-light district to distribute condoms led to imaginative promotion techniques, such as providing gas station attendants and traffic police with condoms to give motorists. Between 1990 and 2003, his programs helped cut infections in Thailand by 85%. *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 6 /1/07.

UNITED STATES

Beltsville, MD – Statistical Brief #45 of the National Inpatient Survey, produced by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, released circumcision data for 2005. Prior to release from the hospital, 56% of boys were circumcised; 44% of boys were kept intact. Regional *genital integrity rates* are: Northeast 35.5%; North Central 25.1%; South 43.7%; and West 68.8%.

Boston, MD – When HIV-positive men were circumcised, it may have raised the risk of infection to their female partners, according to researchers from Johns Hopkins University and Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda and presented at the 15th Annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections. *International Herald Tribune*, 2/4/08.

New York, NY – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) warned against a new trend of parents using healthcare workers to perform cutting to minimize medical problems. Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid voiced concern about "medicalization" of the practice. Younger and younger girls are being subjected to cutting to reduce complaints or the possibility of refusal. UNFPA is backing initiatives promoting alternative rites of passage for girls. *Scoop.com*, 2/5/07.

"Were circumcision a new procedure, ethics approval, scientific support, cooperation from colleagues, trial participants, and government or charity funding would not be forthcoming. The costs to the NHS of an 'unnecessary' procedure also need to be taken into consideration. In the United States reconstructive surgery is a lucrative industry." Birte Twisselmann, Assistant Editor, *British Medical Journal* 2008;336-60 (12 January)

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Announcements

15th Annual Demonstration/March Against Infant Circumcision, US Capitol, *Genital Integrity Awareness Week*. March 29th - April 3rd, 2008. See www.sicsociety.org.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIA BOOKS

Available from NOCIRC, POB 2512, San Anselmo, CA 94979-2512, USA:

The Truth Seeker: Crimes of Genital Mutilation. 1st International Symposium on Circumcision. James W. Prescott, editor, Marilyn Fayre Milos, co-editor. 1989. \$10ppd.

Sexual Mutilations: A Human Tragedy. 4th International Symposium on Sexual Mutilations, ed. by George C. Denniston and Marilyn Fayre Milos. 1997. \$70ppd.

Male and Female Circumcision: Medical, Legal, and Ethical Considerations in Pediatric Practice. 5th International Symposium on Sexual Mutilations, ed. by George C. Denniston, Frederick Mansfield Hodges, and Marilyn Fayre Milos. 1999. \$75ppd.

Understanding Circumcision: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to a Multi-Dimensional Problem. 6th International Symposium on Genital Integrity, ed. by George C. Denniston, Frederick Mansfield Hodges, and Marilyn Fayre Milos. 2001. \$75ppd.

Flesh and Blood: Perspectives in the Problem of Circumcision in Contemporary Society. 7th International Symposium on Genital Integrity, ed. by George C. Denniston, Frederick Mansfield Hodges, and Marilyn Fayre Milos. 2004. \$75ppd.

Bodily Integrity and the Politics of Circumcision: Culture, Controversy, and Change. 8th International Symposium on Genital Integrity, ed. by George C. Denniston, Pia Grassivaro Gallo, Frederick Mansfield Hodges, Marilyn Fayre Milos, and Franco Viviani. 2006. \$75ppd.

Books & Booklets

Abandoning Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: An In-Depth Look at Promising Practices, US Agency for International Development. Request order form from Population Reference Bureau, 800-877-9881. Email popref@prb.org.

Awaken, Equality Now newsletter, 250 West 57th St #1527, NY, NY 10107.

The AIDS Pandemic: The Collision of Epidemiology with Political Correctness, by James Chin. 2007. Radcliffe Publishing. \$39.95.

A Surgical Temptation: The Demonization of the Foreskin & the Rise of Circumcision in Britain, Robert Darby, Ph.D. 2005. Chicago University Press. To order, email quabbin@rcn.com or call 978-544-7141.

Children's Genitals Under the Knife: Social imperatives, secrecy and shame, Hanny Lightfoot-Klein. 2007. BookSurge Publishing, 866-308-6235 or www.booksurge.com. ISBN: 1-4196-2540-3.



"Victorious Babies" by Alex Steelsmith

Connection Parenting: Parenting through Connection instead of Coercion, through Love instead of Fear, Pam Leo. 2005. \$14. CDS Books, NY, 800-343-4499.

Doctors Re-examine Circumcision, Thomas J. Ritter, MD, and George C. Denniston, MD. 3rd edition. 2002. \$15ppd. Washington: Third Millennium Publishing Co. ISBN: 0-9711878-0-0.

Foreskin Care: A Parent's Guide. 2006. Minimum order 25; healthcare providers, \$12, non-profits, \$7. To order, send check to: Dan Bollinger, Boys Health Advisory, 1970 North River Rd, West Lafayette, IN 47906. Inquiries: babyboyinfo@insightbb.com.

Guide to Getting it On, Paul Joannides. 2006. \$19.95. Goofy Foot Press, POB 1719. Waldport, OR 97394. www.goofyfootpress.com.

Healing Circumcision, Deva Daricha. 2003. \$30 book and CD. Deva Daricha, Director, Centre for Human Transformation, Box 233, Yarra Glen, Victoria 3775 Australia.

The Invisible Cure: AIDS in Africa, Helen Epstein. 2007. \$25. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

I Want My Foreskin for Giftmas!, Carl Schutt. 2004. \$15. ISBN 0-9753202-6-2. Inkus Imagination, POB 35, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Review copy free w/ \$3 postage. Mention this with your order and 10% of sale will be donated to NOCIRC. Musical read-a-long: www.IWantMyForeskinForGiftmas.com.

The Male Herbal: The Definitive Health Care Book for Men & Boys, 2d ed. James Green, Herbalist. 2007. \$16.95. Crossing Press. ISBN: 978-1-58091-175-7.

Marked in Your Flesh: Circumcision from Ancient Judea to Modern America, Leonard Glick, MD, PhD. 2005. Oxford University Press. To order, email quabbin@rcn.com or call 978-544-7141.

Pregnancy & Childbirth Secrets, Gail J. Dahl. 2007. \$19.95. Innovate Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-896937-08-3.

What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Circumcision: Untold Facts on America's Most Widely Performed - and Most Unnecessary - Surgery, Paul M. Fleiss, MD, and Frederick M. Hodges, DPhil. 2002. \$15ppd. New York: Warner Books. ISBN: 0-446-67880-5.

Uncut: The Natural History of the Foreskin, Sherwin Carlquist, PhD. 2007. \$25 ppd. Send check to Sherwin Carlquist to Pinecone Press, 4539 Via Huerto, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. ISBN-0-964881-9-7. [Adult content.]

Videos & CDs

Circumcision? Intact Facts. 18-min. VHS. \$44.05. Injoy Productions, 7107 La Vista Place, Longmont, CO 80503. Tel: 800-326-2082.

NEW! *Cut: Slicing Through the Myths of Circumcision* by Eliyahu Ungar-Sargon. 70-min. DVD. \$24.95 plus \$4.95 S&H. www.CutTheFilm.com.

Mother, Why Was I Circumcised? Program for Dutch public broadcast, VPRO, see www.macdocman.com.

Birth As We Know It. 60-min. DVD. \$50. Beautiful births and information about circumcision and genital integrity. www.birthintobeing.com.

Tahara. 18-min. NTSC VHS. \$30ppd (\$100 for institutions, schools, libraries). Sara Rashad. www.taharafilm.com.

Restoration in Focus: Instructional Video. 100-min. VHS-PAL tape £15 (DVD & Joy of Uncircumcising!) e-book \$34 (www.foreskinrestoration.info).



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National Express direct coach service to
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Staffordshire has lots of tourist attractions. A coach and guides will be available for day trips, returning in time for the evening meal. Prices at cost.

*For additional information, contact David Smith, Manager,
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