

Executive Summary

Female Genital Mutilation, or FGM, is a problem that currently plagues African women. The lack of awareness is why FGM is occurring and it needs to be addressed. The World Health Organization had said FGM is the practice of partial or total removal of female genitalia or other injury to the female genitals for non- medical reasons. There's been a high prevalence of FGM in "the horn of Africa." This has occurred because of old traditions, but with new medical advances and learning more about sexual reproductive health, developed nations have seen the repercussions of the procedure and how they do not justify the action. The numerous physical ailments surpass the old myths about reproduction and chastity believes these old villages have.

Westerners have let this practice occur because we've put it under the blanket of "traditions" and that we should leave them be. We've let the cultural and economic factors of FGM occur because "We shouldn't change tradition." Young girls are taught that they should be cut because a boy won't want to marry them if they aren't. Young boys are taught to marry a cut "pure" girl. These kinds of thoughts have forced the newer generations to feed into older traditions. Most of these villages are also rather poor; girls see marriage as a way out of poverty. The "need" to marry makes FGM more prevalent because in their eyes you cannot get to point b (marriage) without going through point A (Female Genital Mutilation).

There are many serious side effects to FGM. They range from short term effects that could easily be helped, however due to poverty they are not aided and they develop into long term medical issues. Infections, trauma, blood clotting could lead up to infertility, negative self-esteem, and death. We should also think about who this problem is affecting. This does not only affect the primary victim, which is the woman. This also claims families, neighbors, and children as the secondary victims.

There have been many discussions on how to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation. World Vision has started an effort to help normalize and encourage women and families to opt against Female Genital Mutilation. They have built townships to let women know there will be support for the women who are ostracized due to refusing the procedure. WHO has also started an educational effort against Female Genital Mutilation by opening clinics for women to learn about their reproductive systems and the lack of need of Female Genital Mutilation. This type of intervention had been effective in the past. It's up to the larger organizations to go to Africa and be more one on one help to the victims and family of Female Genital Mutilation

- Education to the African people about sexual health and their reproductive system
- Support to the women and girls that are brave to go against norms and not subject themselves to Female Genital Mutilation
- Donations to the Organizations that help make this dream a reality.

These are steps that the general public, organizations, non-profits and governments can take to help the women in need.

