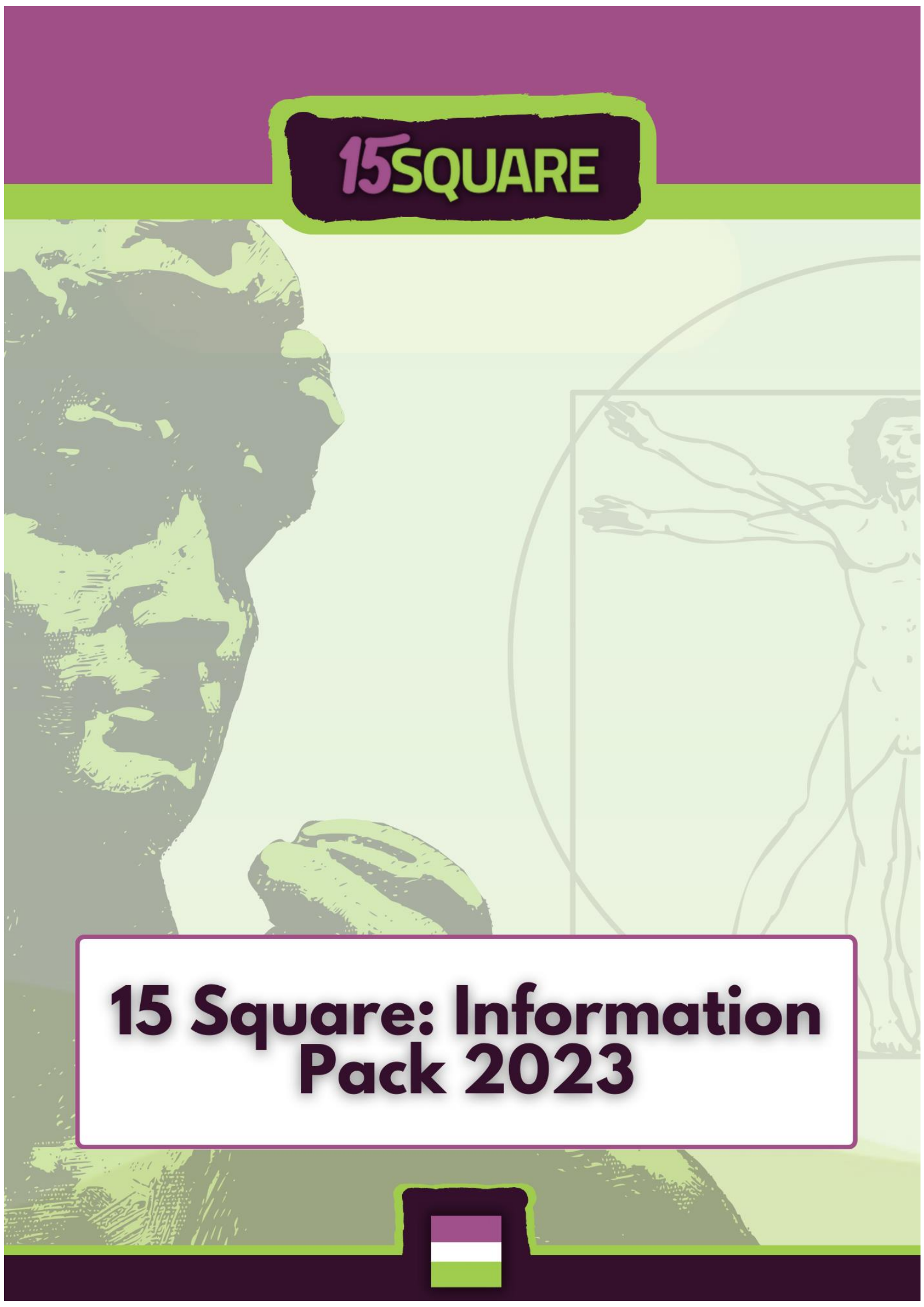


15SQUARE



15 Square: Information Pack 2023



15 Square Information Pack

Introduction

This document is aimed at assisting interested individuals understand the arguments against circumcision. We understand that different cultures talk about circumcision differently, and the typical assumption is that it is harmless. In the USA and other countries where circumcision is a mainstream practice, we understand that there is a great deal of social pressure and financial incentive within medical institutions to promote the benefits of circumcision. This document aims to provide links to resources that demonstrate an alternative view and inform the reader of the negative consequences arising from practice.

15 Square are aware of the efficacy of circumcision for some medical conditions, and we acknowledge that this is a viable method of resolving *some* serious healthcare conditions. We maintain that healthcare practitioners still ought to be aware of the consequences, and where possible be aware of viable alternatives as a first course of action. We vehemently stand against justifications for circumcision as a prophylaxis.

Current health arguments used to justify circumcision as a prophylaxis.

HIV/AIDS

We are aware of the HIV/AIDS arguments, and we find it thoroughly unconvincing, however we will not address this in this document as it requires a comprehensive rebuttal. If you would like to see our critique on HIV/AIDS prophylaxis, please get in touch. In an effort to meet the KPI targets for mass circumcision, clinicians across Africa have been responsible for giving rise to issues such as bribery, abduction, use of illegal surgical methods, unhygienic practices leading to infection, total penectomy (removal of the entire penis), damage to healthcare infrastructure, misinformation campaigns, and unacceptable levels of aftercare. The VMMC (Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision) project has notable funders including The Gates Foundation, PEPFAR and the WHO.

Urinary Tract Infection's

"Most UTI's can be easily treated with antibiotics" - NHS. We use the argument by analogy, that removing the breasts would reduce the chances of breast cancer. This would still be unacceptable. Circumcision as a prophylactic can only be considered if it is shown that the foreskin is useless, that the surgery has no pain or consequence, and that there are no alternatives that can be less invasive. This information pack will refute all of this. Other factors will be addressed further on.

Penile cancer

Between 0.3-1 per 100,000 men get penile cancer (500 in the UK. If we assume that 100% of men who are circumcised would have had their cancer prevented, then this would still result in as many as 330,000+ unnecessary surgeries without the consent of the individual. Phimosis is also an indicator of increased risk of penile cancer, yet this issue can generally be resolved without circumcision. Good hygiene practice also reduces the risk of penile cancer.

Note: Circumcision literature discussing 'benefits' almost always originates in countries where there is widespread circumcision culture. Most medical establishments in non-circumcising countries consider the practice unnecessary unless there is a medical need. This can be seen in the statements by various authorities worldwide. Similarly, there is a plethora of articles written to promote circumcision that masquerade as impartial/neutral. Often these are financial biases promoted by clinics or institutions directly profiting from services related.

As time has progressed and the side effects are being more widely talked about, medical establishments are endorsing the practice less and less.

"The reason for our adoption of an official viewpoint regarding this matter is the increasing emphasis on children's rights. It is particularly relevant for doctors that children must not be subjected to medical proceedings that have no therapeutic or preventative value. In addition to this, there is growing concern regarding complications, both minor and serious, which can occur as a result of circumcising a child. A third reason for this viewpoint is the growing sentiment that there is a discrepancy between the KNMG's firm stance with regard to female genital mutilation and the lack of a stance with regard to the non-therapeutic circumcision of male minors, as the two have a number of similarities."

- Royal Dutch Medical Association
<https://www.knmg.nl/circumcision/>

Recently, every single Danish health authority endorsed an age limit of 18 for NTMC (non-therapeutic male circumcision) and genital alterations.

“The entire Danish medical establishment now supports the abolishment of non-therapeutic genital alterations of children below the age of 18. ...Surgeons, anaesthesiologists, paediatricians, urologists, nurses, physiotherapists, midwives, anyone you can think of.”

- Lena Nyhus, Intact Denmark, May 2021

Find out more about the 2021 bill from Intact: Denmark

<https://www.facebook.com/IntactDenmark/videos/1479700209035189>

Alternative link:

[https://scontent.flhr2-3.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t66.36281-](https://scontent.flhr2-3.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t66.36281-6/100000000_820916275472136_5473981267195408065_n.mp4?_nc_cat=101&ccb=1-3&_nc_sid=985c63&efg=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyI6Im9lcF9zZCJ9&_nc_ohc=GO21B_dokNcAX8NWZJH&_nc_ht=scontent.flhr2-3.fna&oh=dd18bf192492e684e92a35cfd1a05b56&oe=60D58748)

[6/100000000_820916275472136_5473981267195408065_n.mp4?_nc_cat=101&ccb=1-3&_nc_sid=985c63&efg=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyI6Im9lcF9zZCJ9&_nc_ohc=GO21B_dokNcAX8NWZJH&_nc_ht=scontent.flhr2-3.fna&oh=dd18bf192492e684e92a35cfd1a05b56&oe=60D58748](https://scontent.flhr2-3.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t66.36281-6/100000000_820916275472136_5473981267195408065_n.mp4?_nc_cat=101&ccb=1-3&_nc_sid=985c63&efg=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyI6Im9lcF9zZCJ9&_nc_ohc=GO21B_dokNcAX8NWZJH&_nc_ht=scontent.flhr2-3.fna&oh=dd18bf192492e684e92a35cfd1a05b56&oe=60D58748)

Historically circumcision was a prophylactic against: bed wetting, club foot, blindness, epilepsy, cancer of men and women, masturbation insanity, tuberculosis and hernias.

These arguments became justifications to continue this practice.

Our Approach

Whilst 15 Square recognise the harms that men report, we operate on the principle of charity. This is the assumption that everyone has the best of intentions until it is clear that this is not the case. Therefore, parents, religious communities and cultures that continue to practice genital surgery are assumed to have their child's best interests at heart. It is our intention to educate and inform rather than to pass judgement or demonise.

We hope to work with communities and promote active discussion and representation of critics from within these cultures.

We do not actively push a narrative that this is "mutilation". Instead, we affirm whatever belief that men have regarding their experiences, both for men who feel traumatised/mutilated and for those who feel content. It is not 15 Squares position to convince people to pass judgement, only to provide objective health arguments, information, support, and the direct lived experiences of men who do feel harmed.

Further information on our approach to this subject can be found in our Outreach Policy.

Contents

0. Introduction

We hope that the information herein provided will confirm the following:

1. There are recognised changes to the mechanic and sensory qualities of the penis.
2. A cross section of people from all backgrounds that practice circumcision have complaints. – A list of previous documentaries showcasing this fact is provided within this document.
3. Some men attach deep psychological significance to their circumcision. This can manifest in a variety of ways depending on personal circumstances.
4. There is institutionalised sex discrimination within the UK legislation: legislation protecting girls from cultural justifications for female circumcision is not applied to boys – even for more minor forms of FGM that are less invasive than
5. Problems are not recorded and there is an inadequate complaints procedure.

- Appendix

Useful articles

Stories from men Volume 1

– To be completed

6. The procedure is being massively over-diagnosed. – *Supplementary links in the meantime provided below*

(Reference content - **Is the NHS carrying out thousands of unnecessary circumcisions on teenage boys? New report shows irreversible surgery is carried out 10,000 times per year** - <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-10554847/Is-NHS-carrying-thousands-unnecessary-circumcisions-teenage-boys.html>)

Doctors criticize laws on circumcision of boys

<https://www.aerzteblatt.de/nachrichten/sw/Beschneidung%20von%20Jungen?s=&p=1&n=1&nid=86976>

NORM UK and the Medical Case Against Circumcision

A British Perspective - John P. Warren

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4757-2679-4_7

The incidence of phimosis in boys

<https://europepmc.org/article/med/10444134>

7. There is a great ethical double standard with regards to male circumcision. – To be completed

8. 15 Square have been trying to contact professional bodies for years, many of which have dismissed us with a myriad of different excuses. We will include the correspondence from some of these professional institutions. – To be completed

THE WONDERS OF CIRCUMCISION

Claude-Francois
Lallemand
circumcises a patient
to cure him from
nocturnal seminal
emissions

WET DREAMS
1832



MASTURBATION
1845

Edward H. Dixon declares
that circumcision prevents
masturbation

Jonathon Hutchinson
publishes his theory that
circumcision can help to
prevent syphilis

SYPHILIS
1855



EPILEPSY
1870

Lewis A Sayre publishes a
paper 'proving' that
circumcision cures epilepsy

Lewis A Sayre declares
that circumcision
prevents spinal
paralysis

PARALYSIS
1870



Joseph Bell announces his discovery that circumcision cures bed wetting

BED WETTING
1873



CLUBFOOT
1875

Lewis A Sayre declares that the foreskin causes curvature of the spine, paralysis of the bladder, and clubfoot

William G. Eggleston declares that the foreskin causes crossed eye

CROSS EYES
1886



PURITY
1888

John Harvey Kellog promotes circumcision and FGM to punish against masturbation and promiscuity. This paves the way for USA policy

P.C Remondino says that circumcision of black men will help to prevent them from raping white people

RAPE
1894



INCONTINENCE
1894

H.L Rosenberg writes a paper 'proving' that circumcision cures rectal and urinary incontinence

Abraham L. Wolbarst claims that circumcision prevents tuberculosis and demands compulsory circumcision of all children in the USA

TUBERCULOSIS
1914



CANCER
1926

Abraham L. Wolbarst claims that circumcision prevents penile cancer

R.W. Cockshut demands that all boys be circumcised in order to desensitize the penis and promote chastity

CHASTITY
1935



DAMAGE
1941

Allan F. Gutmacher promotes mass circumcision as a means of blunting male sexual sensitivity. He also spreads the false claim that a baby's foreskin retracts and should be scrubbed daily

Abraham Ravich claims that circumcision prevents prostate cancer

PROSTATE
1942



TONGUE
1949

Eugene H. Hand declares that circumcision prevents venereal disease and cancer of the tongue

Ernest L. Wydner claims that male circumcision prevents cervical cancer in women

CERVIX
1954



LOGIC
1958

C.F. McDonald says "the same reasons that apply for the circumcision of males are generally valid when considered for the female"

Morris Fishbein calls for circumcision to prevent nervousness and of course also masturbation

NERVOUSNESS
1969



BLADDER
1971

Abraham Ravich claims that circumcision prevents cancer of the bladder and the rectum

Aaron J. Fink claims that circumcision prevents AIDS

HIV/AIDS
1986



SAND
1991

Aaron J. Fink declares mass circumcision is necessary to prevent sand from getting into soldiers' foreskins

1. There are recognised changes to the mechanic and sensory qualities of the penis.

As publicised and shared by the British Academy of Urological Surgeons there are several quantifiable problems that can occur. This list is not exhaustive; however it does represent a portion of the physical complaints that we frequently hear. You can find the full document on the BAUS website.

<https://www.baus.org.uk/userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Circumcision.pdf>

After-effect	Risk
Swelling of the penis which usually lasts a few days	 All patients
Increased sensitivity of the head of your penis which can last for up to two weeks	 Almost all patients
Permanent altered or reduced sensation in your glans penis (head of the penis)	 Almost all patients
Infection of the incision requiring antibiotics or surgical drainage	 Between 1 in 50 & 1 in 100 patients (1 to 2%)
Bleeding from the wound, occasionally requiring a further procedure	 Between 1 in 50 & 1 in 100 patients (1 to 2%)
Dissatisfaction with the cosmetic result	 Between 1 in 50 & 1 in 250 patients
Oedema (swelling) of excess skin requiring further surgery and skin removal	 Between 1 in 50 & 1 in 250 patients
Anaesthetic or cardiovascular problems possibly requiring intensive care (including chest infection, pulmonary embolus, stroke, deep vein thrombosis, heart attack and death)	 Between 1 in 50 & 1 in 250 patients (your anaesthetist can estimate your individual risk)

The last row is of interest, however we would draw attention also to the third row, as this is the most common complaint that we receive at 15 Square. The reduced sensitivity during sex, and the pain of abrasion due to the exposed glans. This also includes sensations of “tightness” due to the amount of skin that is removed during some circumcisions.

Any alteration to sensation or sensitivity is bound to receive mixed reception. Sexual decisions are personal decisions. Men robbed of the choice to make this personal decision can become resentful and angry at the institutions that encouraged it.

Here are small selection of some supporting papers.

MALE CIRCUMCISION DECREASES PENILE SENSITIVITY AS MEASURED IN A LARGE COHORT.

G.A. Bronselaer, J.M. Schober, H.F. Meyer-Bahlburg, G. T'Sjoen, R. Vlietinck, P.B. Hoebeke. "Male circumcision decreases penile sensitivity as measured in a large cohort." BJU Int. 2013;111(5):820–7.

Conclusions

This study confirms the importance of the foreskin for penile sensitivity, overall sexual satisfaction, and penile functioning.

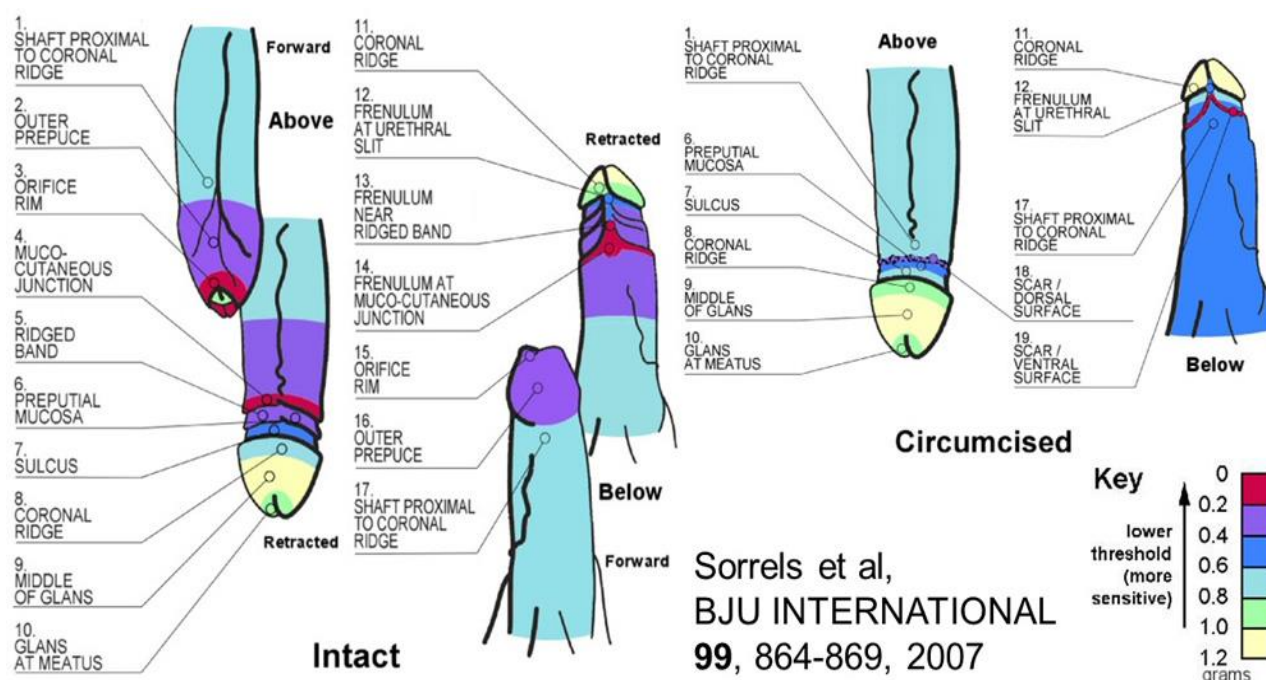
Furthermore, this study shows that a higher percentage of circumcised men experience discomfort or pain and unusual sensations as compared with the uncircumcised population.

Before circumcision without medical indication, adult men, and parents considering circumcision of their sons, should be informed of the importance of the foreskin in male sexuality.

FINE-TOUCH PRESSURE THRESHOLDS IN THE ADULT PENIS

Sorrells ML, Snyder JL, Reiss MD, Eden C, Milos MF, Wilcox N, Van Howe RS. "Fine-touch pressure thresholds in the adult penis." Br J Urol Int. 2007;99:864–9.

"The circumcised men indicated lower orgasm intensity at the dorsal and lateral sides of the glans and needed a stronger effort to obtain orgasm than those who were uncircumcised. In addition, a significantly larger percentage of circumcised men reported numbness and unusual sensations at the glans. The most plausible explanation for all the differences listed here is the absence of the foreskin. The removal of the highly innervated foreskin might diminish strong somatosensory sensation, particularly located in the ridge band."



The research conducted by Sorrells et al mirrors exactly what men writing in to us have long been saying. Many of the active pro-circumcision lobbyists were circumcised neonatally, thus lacking the first hand

experience of comparing before and after. Almost all men circumcised as adults recognise some sensation changes on some level as the glans becomes constantly exposed. The myth that it makes no difference comes from the same era of medical thinking that concluded that babies feel no pain, leading to open heart surgeries and circumcisions being conducted without anaesthesia. To this day there is still an overt legal loophole which allows circumcisions to take place without anaesthetic. ~~If you are interested in this, read section 7~~ (to be completed).

2. A cross section of people from all backgrounds that practice circumcision have complaints.

Men who are circumcised as neonates (nontherapeutic male circumcision), and those circumcised in later life both have the potential to suffer from physical and/or psychological issues either primary or secondary to the circumcision procedure. Amongst these men are practitioners of Judaism and Islam, both secular and non-secular.

Interestingly, similar to FGM practices, the majority of groups and individuals in favour of routine circumcision come directly from the cultures and backgrounds where it is already carried out routinely. The justifications come second. It is rare to get an impartial advocate in favour of the practice.

A major point of concern that is present in almost all of the cases is that of *informed personal consent*. This can be due to a medical institution if they do not explore alternatives or provide adequate information surrounding consequences. It can also be due to cultural/religious institutions making decisions for men that they do not grow up agreeing with. Taking the decision away from them can result in feelings of violation and loss of liberty and freedom of religion. This is our view, but also the words of men who have contacted us. Organisations such as “Beyond the Bris”, “Jews Against Circumcision” and “Intact America” are all groups that have critiqued their own culture, and circumcision in general. We do not ask men about their backgrounds, as anyone from any background can have an issue with a practise that is harmful or infringes on personal freedom of religion and autonomy. Example of men from varied backgrounds will be shared as evidence in section 3. On the following page is a short list of some of the documentaries that take on this subject, (access to some of these can be found via the 15 Square website under the ‘News & Blog’ section).

Documentaries from circumcision critics:

It's a Boy - Victor Schönfeld

♦ Featuring 15 Square Members

The original Male Circumcision Film. This groundbreaking acclaimed documentary investigation of male ritual circumcision offers an authoritative account of the dangers and the damages involved for children, and chronicles an emotional story of a Jewish circumcision that goes dreadfully wrong. Made by Jewish filmmaker and journalist Victor Schonfeld.

"Schonfeld got a one-in-a-million stroke of luck; and, like all cunning filmmakers, he made the most of it."

- **The Independent**

"A devastating indictment... A television first."

- **The Times**

"Deserves an award... A brave documentary which ought to be a catalyst for change."

- **The Irish Independent**

"It should be seen by everyone... This programme has a point to make which requires debate."

- **Linda Grant, Orange Award winner, in The Jewish Chronicle**

American Circumcision - Brendon Marotta

Circumcision is the most common surgery in America, yet America is the only industrialized country in the world to routinely practice non-religious infant circumcision. Why does America continue to cut the genitals of its newborn baby males when the rest of the world does not?

American Circumcision explores both sides of the circumcision debate, including the growing Intactivist movement (intact + activist), which believes all human beings have a right to keep the body they were born with intact.

Mom, Why Did You Circumcise Me? - Michael Schaap

♦ Featuring 15 Square Members

Following the story of Michael Schaap, a Dutch journalist & film maker. Michael tries to learn more about circumcision from his mother, politicians, Jews, Muslims, Activists from Britain and America.

Cut - Eliyahu Ungar-Sargon

Cut is a documentary film by Eliyahu Ungar-Sargon which examines the subject of male circumcision from a religious, scientific and ethical perspective. Using cutting-edge research, in addition to interview footage of rabbis, philosophers, and scientists, Cut challenges the viewer to confront their biases by asking difficult questions about this long-standing practice.

A Cut Too Far - Ali May/Adnan Sarwar

♦ **Featuring 15 Square Members**

Thousands of baby boys are circumcised annually in the UK mainly for religious reasons. With some countries debating a ban on it, the programme asks: should we ban it here?

Featured News Reports:

Inside Out: BBC East Midlands 04/03/2019 – Caroline Lowbridge/Lukwesa Burak

♦ Featuring 15 Square Members

Circumcision's silent few - the men who say the procedure ruined their lives and the faith leaders who insist it's an important moment in a man's life.

Circumcision: My Penis Causes Me Constant Pain – Shane Fennelly

This featured news media follows the story of a man named Avon Cornish, an Emirati ex-pat living in the UK. Avon was circumcised according to Islamic tradition and has physical pain and has been psychologically traumatized by his experiences. In this story he tries to find out how to restore his lost foreskin using non-surgical methods.

Debate: Circumcision Ethics Call - 27/06/2011 – John Sudworth

John Sudworth from the BBC approached the ethical debate of circumcision. Supplementary to this radio documentary piece is an article written in 2011 and [featured on the BBC](#). The article covers NORM-UK, the previous name for 15 Square.

The Circumcision Decision – Candace Owens - 01/06/2023

Candace Owens – American political commentator and social activist attempts to portray a non-partisan argument against routine circumcision. She discusses her experiences in learning more about [circumcision from a parents perspective](#). Additionally, she features [the story of David Reimer](#); the victim of a botched circumcision and an involuntary sex change that completely ruined his childhood. She talks about his life story and events that followed the procedure.

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl - The Oprah Winfrey Show – 2000

[The story of David Reimer](#) as told by Oprah Winfrey in year 2000. David Reimer (Born Bruce Reimer) was the victim of experimental gender reassignment following a botched circumcision that had burnt his penis off as an infant after doctors were unable to repair the removal of a significant part of his penis. David's struggle is a stark warning of how serious and life altering the complications from a botched circumcision can be.

These lists are not exclusive and aim to introduce an outsider to the arguments against circumcision. There have been several documentaries, performance pieces and books that present the issues associated with circumcision. Naturally, the subject isn't one that gathers a wide audience, but this is changing as social attitudes towards men's problems are considered more fairly. The discussion of consent is a prolific, and this has contributed to a greater level of understanding for this issue.

A brief mention of the charities and organisations committed to raising awareness, supporting traumatized individuals, and ending the practice of unnecessary genital surgery will show how diverse and well supported this movement has become in recent years, despite fierce pushback from the cultures that are attached to the idea.

15 Square/NORM-UK NORM-UK / 15 Square - (UK)
AKTION REGEN - Verein für Entwicklungszusammenarbeit - (Austria)
Attorneys for the rights of the child - (California, USA)
Australasian Institute for Genital Autonomy - AIGA Inc. - (Australia)
Bay Area Intactivists - (USA)
Ben Shalem - (Israel)
The Circumcision Forum: beschneidungsforum.de - (Germany)
Berufsverband der Kinder- und Jugendärzte BVKJ - (Germany)
Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Säkulare Grüne - (Germany)
Canadian Foreskin Awareness Project - (Canada)
Children's Health & Human Rights Partnership - (Canada)
Deutsches Kinderbulletin - (Germany)
Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.) - Physicians for Genital Integrity (Seattle, USA)
Droit au corps - (France)
Facharbeitskreis Beschneidungsbetroffener im MOGiS E.V. - Eine Stimme für Betroffene - (Germany)
Förderkreis AIDS- und FGM-Aufklärung e.V. Feuervogel.Org - Aufklärungsprojekte über Genitalverstümmelung bei Mädchen und Frauen in Westafrika - (Germany)
Forum Männer in Theorie und Praxis der Geschlechterverhältnisse - (Germany)
Genital Autonomy - (UK)
Genital Autonomy America/NOCIRC - (USA)
Giordano-Bruno-Stiftung - (Germany)
GSSG: Gemeinnützige Stiftung Sexualität und Gesundheit - (Germany)
GynZone - (Denmark)
HennaMond E.V. - Mut, Rat und Lebenshilfe - (Germany)
INTACT - Internationale Aktion gegen die Beschneidung von Mädchen und Frauen E.V. - (Germany)
Ibn Rushd – Goethe Moschee - (Germany)
Intact Africa
Intact America - (USA)
Intact Denmark
Intact Iceland
Intact Kenya
Intact Nederland

Intact Switzerland
 Intaction - (USA)
 Intaktiv E.V. - (Germany)
 JÄ-föreningen, Turku/Åbo, - (Finland)
 Jews Against Circumcision - (USA)
 Jungs E.V. - (Germany)
 KAHAL Israel - (Israel)
 LAG DIE LINKE. Queer Baden-Württemberg - (Germany)
 LAG Laizismus Bayern - Die Linke - (Germany)
 Lobby für Mädchen E.V. (Germany)
 Men Do Complain - (UK)
 MOGiS E.V. - (Germany)
 Partei der Humanisten - (Germany)
 Pro Familia Augsburg E.V. - (Germany)
 Pro familia Nordrhein-Westfalen (Germany)
 Pro Kinderrechte CH - (Schweiz)
 Projekt 100% MENSCH (Germany)
 Protect the Child - (Israel)
 Säkulare Flüchtlingshilfe E.V. - (Germany)
 Sexpo - (Finland)
 TABU International E.V. - (Germany)
 Terre Des Femmes - (Germany)
 The VMMC Experience Project - (Kenya, Uganda)
 Väteraufbruch Für Kinder - Kreisverein Köln E.V. (Germany)
 Verband Medizinischer Fachberufe E.V. (Germany)
 Your Whole Baby (USA)
 The Central Council of Ex-Muslims (Germany)
 Future Choices
 Secular Medical Forum
 National Secular Society
 MOGiS E.V worldwide day of genital autonomy
 NOCIRC Michigan

This is a small sample to give an idea of supporting charities and organisations. Needless to say there are hundreds more. Numerous high-profile individuals who have expressed concern for unnecessary genital surgery are included here.

Notable figures include:

Alan Cumming (Patron of 15 Square, Actor, Documentarian, Social activist and commentator)
 Miriam Margolyes (Actress, Narrator, Voiceover artist, and Documentarian)
 Tom Rosenthal (Actor and Comedian)
 Simon Amstell (Actor and Comedian)
 Russell Brand (Actor and Comedian)
 Joe Rogan (Comedian, Sports commentator, Referee and TV/Radio Presenter)
 Stephen Fry (Actor, Comedian, Presenter)
 Professor Jack Cohen (Past Patron of 15 Square, Professor, Author)
 Brian Seol (Past Patron of 15 Square, Documentarian, Producer, Art Critic)
 Jeremy Paxman (Journalist, Presenter)

Additionally, biographer Jean Lassegue asserted that Alan Turing was impacted by his circumcision and felt that it permanently affected his psychology.

Circumcision is a practice that has had consistent opposition. Opposers of the practice have often endured ridicule, and many of those that have been affected are mocked by proponents of circumcision who refuse to scrutinize the practice with objectivity, or to acknowledge the qualitative experiences of these men. This is doubly true for men that have been shunned from their communities and cultures, and many men feel as

though they cannot talk about their issues out of fear of social exclusion and reprisal. This has not deterred all those affected, nor the organisations that support them, and 15 Square celebrate that society is finally ready to have this conversation in a mature, respectful, and non-hostile manner.

3. Some men attach deep psychological significance to their circumcision. This can manifest in a variety of ways depending on personal circumstances.

This can be seen in the numerous case studies that we will present. The following stories and extracts are taken from a public forum called "circumcision grief" hosted on the Reddit platform. These comments are available for public viewing. Our own records mirror these, a small sample of these can be found in the appendix. Whilst we do not endorse any messages or sentiments herein, these provide valuable insight into these men's struggles.

***The content hereonin features discussions around mental health struggles and depression.**

Untitled

I realized I was circumcised when I was 14 or 15. Was upset. Vowed to see it outlawed within my lifetime. Forgot about it and moved on with my life. This October a female friend of mine and I were discussing what it's like to have a penis vs. a vagina. Then my friend asked "What's it like to have a foreskin?"

I'd forgotten entirely about circumcision until then. "I WISH I FUCKING KNEW!" I yelled. My friend was compassionate and supportive. I was up late that night researching the subject, ways to sue the people who had done it to me, and crying.

That friend was the first and only person IRL who ever had any readily available sympathy for me. All the others told me I was wrong, one attacked me and compared me to anti-vax, most showed apathy about the subject.

...

I will confront my parents someday, not sure I'll ever forgive them. If my mom has the toxic response I expect her to, I'll cut her out of my life. I'll warn her ahead of time that how she responds is extremely important.

- u/gamingpotato22

Going to kill myself" (UPDATE)

I'm back. Just had a consultation with a penis restoration doctor, he said there's NOTHING HE COULD DO. Every procedure to restore the foreskin is risky or has some shitty downsides. He also mentioned that I should be really sceptical of any surgeon that tries to sell me a surgery that can. He also said he couldn't fix my hypospadias surgery scars without causing more scarring. Feeling completely suicidal at this point, I feel like nobody actually gives a fuck and the only people that do are being paid to. You'll probably all upvote this to spite the restorers and honestly I wish I could have their mentality, it's just really fucking hard to right now. So what's the point of this post you're asking yourself? Well I just saved you a lot of effort, you are welcome. So I'm 17, totally suicidal, restoring is really fucking hard due to scarring from a surgery I had no say in, all I ask is that you me some advice in the comments or pms [private messages].
- u/pm_me_good_samples

↳ IntactBroadSword

I've been impotent my entire life. Most of my shaft skin was removed in addition to a normal circumcision. My penis is so numb, I can barely feel a razor cutting it. Its literally the numbest part my body. To add that I have scar tissue as thick as an eraser where my frenulum is supposed to be, because you guessed it, hypospadias, which isn't necessarily a reason to operate in the first place.

My parents infatuation with the Jewish "race" caused them to destroy my life. To add insult to injury, my family constantly put me in the hands of physical abuse, verbal abuse in the form of NEVER ENDING shaming language. I'm glad they are dead.

↳ You can't restore a body part that was amputated. Welcome to the most unfortunate existence any human can bear. The main mechanism used as motivation throughout life has been tampered with by some psychopath who wants to profit from your misery for the rest of your LIFE.

Mother's confession

After mentioning Tom Rosenthal's show 'Manhood', (touring the UK) to my mother, and the grief this gives him, she announced the method of circumcision performed by the Mohel that was thought superior to the hospital method. I stated neither method should have been performed on me and two brothers, and she mentioned that we were taken away as babies away from her and we didn't make a sound after the circumcision was performed. I stated the trauma was too much and we were all in shock due to the pain.

She agreed that we should not have had this done but she had no other information to oppose this. I said that this was not something that should have been allowed due to the trauma and damage. She said nothing, no apology, no remorse, empathy, or reflection on this offence against her three sons. We have all suffered which I did mention, but no comment from her. She is old but can fully take in information but never shows any empathy. That's easy for her now she will not have any guilt over our suffering. Now I know that she understands the issue but has no feelings about this atrocity. How can anyone deal with this situation? Should I confront her further, or forget about her irresponsibility, and what was done to us?

...

Thanks for your understanding message and support. It has taken decades for me to appreciate that what was done to me and my brothers was wrong. This is because I only became aware of the campaigns, protests, lectures and on line reports recently. There was no reason to think I had been mutilated until my numbness and lack of sensation became so severe I thought I had some neurological disorder. I want her to show some remorse before she dies, as I am the only son that can communicate with her as the other sons are too psychologically damaged to pursue retribution. How did you communicate with your parents over this, and how did they react?

~ u/Mendippete

A lot of times with abuse, we think that healing will be brought about only if we get a meaningful apology. When that apology never comes, we continue to let ourselves suffer. I found a CBT worksheet online about processing forgiveness without an apology. It really helped me feel validated and helped me process and move forward without holding my breath and waiting on the other person to come around. I'd encourage anyone to do the same. It can be really freeing.

•Posted by u/Guy2330

Cant get over my hatred towards my parents

I was cut as a baby. Growing up I always thought my penis looked weird and would pull the skin over the head because it "was protected". Of course the skin would shoot right back when I let go. When I learned about circumcision, I immediately hated my parents. This was about 15 years ago. I have since started restoring my foreskin and I am almost done, however I still have a deep hatred towards my parents.

Whenever I see them, in the back of my mind I think "these assholes mutilated me"

When my brother got a dog and was considering cropping its ears, my mother flipped out and said "How dare you? That is abuse! There is no reason to cut its ears! If you get its ears done I never want that dog in my house again!"

This cemented my hatred. I'm 26 and I hardly ever see my parents. My mother has noticed that I never visit but assumes I'm just busy. How do I tell them that I hate them for mutilating me? I will never get over this. If anything, my hatred is growing as I am beginning to consider starting a family. The thought that you can have a beautiful baby born and immediately cut off the tip of his dick makes me sick.

Complete mental breakdown

In the last week I've had two complete mental/emotional breakdowns. A lot of things are coming together in therapy and it's totally changed my understanding of my life. I feel like I'm struggling to tell the difference between what's real or not. While this stuff is related to relationships and my emotions, when the issue of being cut comes up in my mind It's so much harder than usual to deal with. It just hurts so much. It's really hard to deal with. And it's really hard not to think about, considering it my penis. Every time I see my penis, or think about sex, or go to the bathroom, or sleep (I sleep naked), the scars are there reminding me of what was done to me. I'm really struggling and it feels worse than anything I've dealt with before. I've tried to talk to my mom and my only friend about what's going on, but the response I get is basically, "that sucks, now shut up come help me with my problems." just being ignored and expected to be ok. And being blamed for not helping my mom despite everything I'm going through. It hurts so much and it's so much harder to deal with all this alone. - u/SoldierTheHero

Old_Intactivist

How old are you? If you're still a teenager you may still have a chance to sue the doctor who did that to you. It's only a matter of finding a lawyer who's willing to take your case on a pro-bono basis.

SoldierTheHero

No. I'm 33. Nothing can be done about my foreskin. I just want to fucking die.

Responses to a "Foregen" video on youtube, a company attempting to help restoration of removed foreskins.

- Brandon Hall: Please make this reality. I've been so depressed, I'm not a full man.

- toesvcker: If this fails I'm killing myself.

- Burninizer: What an inspiring video, and what a wonderful man and organisation that he gave rise to. I've spent several years working towards restoring my foreskin, but only recently I learned of Foregen and its goals. I may be a broke university student, but I would be ecstatic to contribute to its funding, however much I can, and perhaps be part of the clinical trials to make this dream a reality.

That said, you don't have to pay a dime to help other people in situations such as mine; you can start open dialogues with other people about preventing this practice from being perpetuated, and let others know that regeneration and restoration are viable solutions. It won't be a fun conversation, but an awkward encounter is not a valid reason for staying quiet.

Griffin: Truly stunning! I was circumcised many years ago because I suffered from Phimosis. At the time there wasn't many options to choose from, it "had to be done". Though now research have found other ways around. It's still a missing piece however, and I would do anything to bring it back. I really hope that there is a way to reverse this process, so bless you sir, this is what we need!

- David Polson: When is this going to happen... I want to be sexually whole again...

These stories are abundant in the thousands. Included in the appendix are some of the anonymous stories sent in to 15 Square by men who wanted to contribute towards an awareness campaign to improve recognition and visibility of their common struggles.

4. There is institutionalised gender discrimination within the UK legislation: unfair protection methods afforded to girls but excluded from boys.

As previously demonstrated, there are a cross section of men who feel harmed. Many of them wish that they had been protected during infancy, a similar concern that was shared by women prior to establishing the FGM legislation in the UK. This section aims to show the issues present in existing legislation.

We would draw your attention to the following provision in the FGM bill, active throughout the UK but present in the Scottish Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2005:

Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005

(3) No offence under subsection (1) [FGM] is committed by an approved person who performs an action mentioned in subsection (4).

(4) Those actions are—

(a) A surgical operation on another person which is necessary for that other person's physical or mental health; or

(b) A surgical operation on another person who is in any stage of labour or has just given birth, for purposes connected with the labour or birth.

(6) For the purposes of determining whether an operation is necessary for the mental health of a person, it is immaterial whether that or any other person believes that the operation is required as a matter of custom or ritual.

--

Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Bill 2018

(5) The court need only have regard to a person's wishes and feelings as mentioned in subsection (4)(c) so far as it considers it appropriate, on the basis of the person's age and understanding, to do so.

As is evident in these sections, these are unique protections only available to girls. Again, these sections are wholly progressive in nature and we fully support this type of legislation and tackling FGM. Our only hope is to extend this legislation to all children and vulnerable people in a universal manner.

This can be considered an egregious disregard for the following section within the Equality Act 2010:

The Equality Act 2010

Chapter 2 Prohibited conduct: Discrimination

Section 19 – Indirect discrimination

(1): A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if A applies to B a provision, criterion or practice which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B's.

(2): For the purposes of subsection (1), a provision, criterion or practice is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B's if—

(a) A applies, or would apply, it to persons with whom B does not share the characteristic,

(b) It puts, or would put, persons with whom B shares the characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom B does not share it,

(c) It puts, or would put, B at that disadvantage, and

(d) A cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

(3) The relevant protected characteristics are—

age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

The FGM bill is discriminatory by exclusion. The lack of a compounding bill to protect boys under the same conditions and circumstances as girls. The double standard is immediately obvious when the justification for circumcision is the right to express freedom of religion within some cultures. This is an invalid reason when used to justify blood rituals that are performed girls.

5. Problems are not recorded and there is an inadequate complaints procedure.

The men who have written to us often complain about the disregard by both the NHS and the private sector. Whilst surgical complications are generally recognised by the medical profession, many of those who contact us complain of ongoing issues resulting from the procedure, unrelated to surgical complication.

Complications includes:

- **Abrasion discomfort** and irritation (leading to desensitisation during sex and masturbation);
- **Feelings of tightness** (sometimes leading to pain);
- **Phantom pain** around the penis and within the groin area (such as poking, itching, or stabbing sensations) that does not subside;
- **Anorgasmia** or loss of pleasure during sex and masturbation;
- **Psychological damage** (derived from perceived or genuine harm, either physical or psychological) including obsessive thoughts, depression, anger, PTSD-like complaints, and issues stemming from feelings of emasculation, loss, and consent violation.

On occasion where surgical complication is present there may be some acknowledgement of short-term issues, and we believe that there is generally more recognition of the changes to sensation. Unfortunately, there are scant academic papers exploring long term studies on late life satisfaction with the outcomes and effects of circumcision making it difficult for professionals to stay adequately informed. This then leads to doctors presuming the safety and efficacy of circumcision without complication and inclines them to dismiss patients who alert them of under-appreciated complications.

The closest large sample long-term followup (interviewing 5434 men) is:

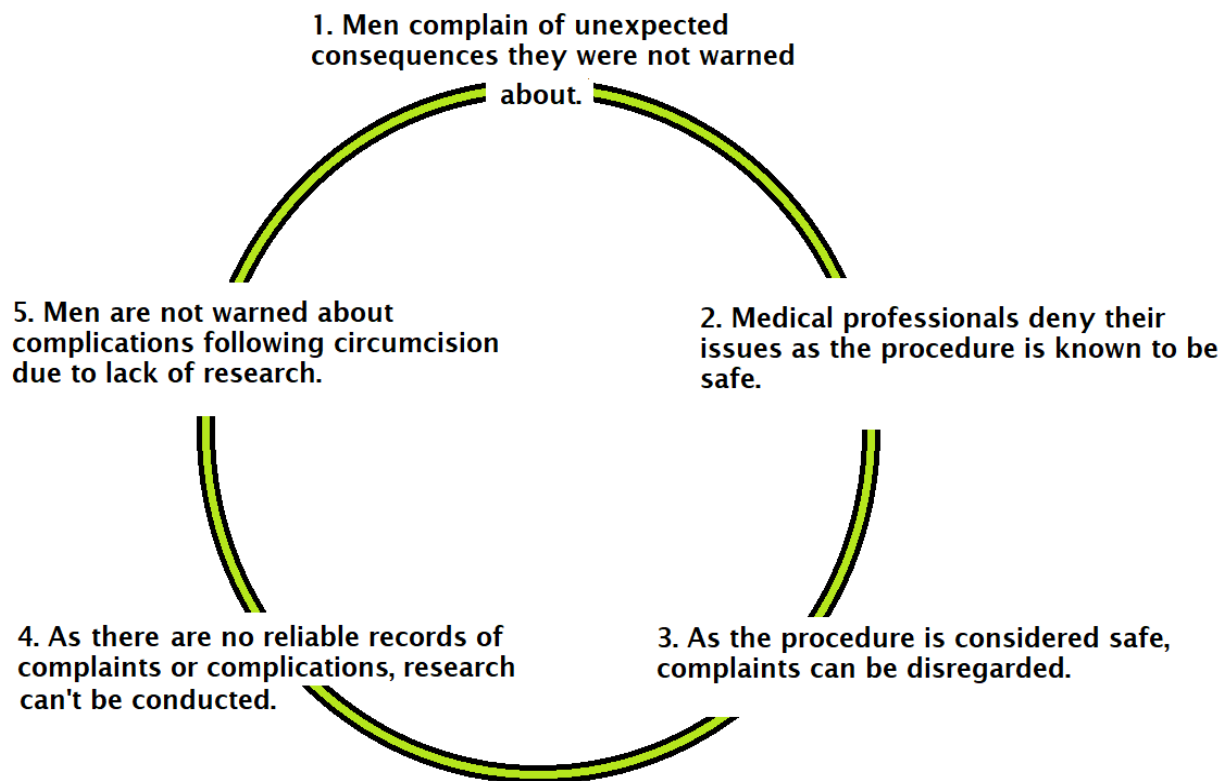
'Extraordinarily high rates of male circumcision in South Korea: history and underlying causes'

M. G. Pang, D. S. Kim, 2002

"Of those who were circumcised long after they had been sexually active, >80% reported no noticeable difference in sexuality, but a man was twice as likely to have experienced diminished sexuality that improved sexuality. Of the doctors who were surveyed, 41% carried out circumcision but, unlike in America, gynaecologists and paediatricians rarely did so. Among the doctors, basic knowledge on circumcision and phimosis was generally lacking, regardless of whether they practiced circumcision or not... Many doctors believe the out-dated and sometimes controversial benefits of circumcision, i.e. prevention of cervical cancer and sexually transmitted diseases, and improved sexuality. Thus the vast majority of doctors recommend circumcision regardless of the patient's age."

15 Square believe that long held biases regarding supposed benefits before the implementation of modern medical ethics and standards still exist within the UK. As mentioned earlier, promoting male chastity, and intentionally causing sexual dysfunction was acknowledged, encouraged, and seen as reasonable justification until the late 1960's, by which point many for-profit healthcare systems (such as America) have entire industries established around ongoing mass circumcision without medical necessity. This has led to a culture of reluctance to address the issues and recognise harm, and there is an active disincentive to re-approach established norms in the same way in which new medical innovations would generally be scrutinised.

15 Square describe the circular logic of medical care providers as follows:



This can be improved by introducing long term follow-ups on patient satisfaction (a circumcised child will be unlikely to express sexual issues or psychological trauma long into adulthood. Additionally, they are less likely to be taken seriously, and unless supported by parents they won't register a complaint).

In the cultural context, parents request it, practitioners perform it, and children can't complain. In order to improve the complaints procedure, 15 Square have advocate 'squaring the circular logic' as can be seen in with 4 fundamental pillars as shown in the next section in order to improve doctors access to information on complications.

Accurate and holistic record keeping

Followups in later life to as large a sample as possible

Research based upon the responses from men with regards to psychological, physical, and ethical perspectives of the men who have undergone the procedure

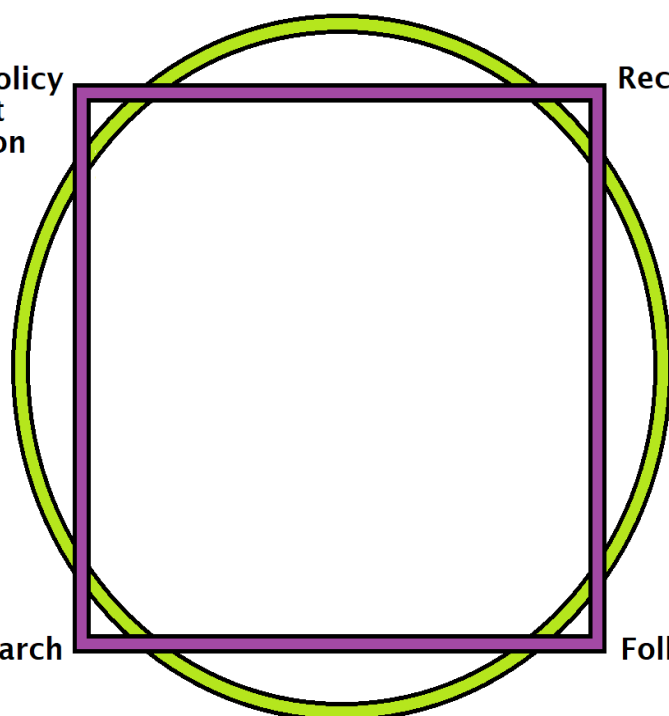
Health policy and information for parents and patients based on the research

Improved Policy & Patient Information

Recording

Research

Followups



For an operation to be deemed successful, this is to say that immediate surgical complications have been avoided. The qualitative outcome (as determined by the patient/individual) further on is not a consideration, nor is it recorded.

The General Medical Council's guidance: *Good Medical Practice*, in *Domain 1: Knowledge skills and performance*, section 13 states "You must take steps to monitor and improve the quality of your work". 15 Square believe that this should be an essential feature of healthcare delivery in future for medical professionals to explore the outcome and impacts of circumcision on their patients. Without this information, the status quo will continue leaving an unknown number of men unsatisfied, harmed, or ruined by the qualitative outcome of circumcision.

The concerning results of [The Paterson Inquiry, February 2020](#) the opening statement reads as follows:

"[The case of Dr Ian Paterson] is the story of a healthcare system which proved itself dysfunctional at almost every level when it came to keeping patients safe, and where those who were the victims of Paterson's malpractice were let down time and time again.

They were initially let down by a consultant surgeon who performed inappropriate or unnecessary procedures and operations. They were then let down both by an NHS trust and an independent healthcare provider who failed to supervise him appropriately and did not respond correctly to well-evidenced complaints about his practice. Once action was finally taken, patients were again let down by wholly inadequate recall procedures in both the NHS and the private sector. The recall of patients did not put their safety and care first, which led many of them to consider the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust and Spire were primarily concerned for their own reputation. Patients were further let down when they complained to regulators and believed themselves frequently treated with disdain. They then felt let down by the Medical Defence Union which used its discretion to avoid giving compensation to Paterson patients once it was clear his malpractice was criminal. Only by taking their cases to sympathetic lawyers did some patients find themselves heard. By that stage many others found their exhaustion was too great and their sense of rejection so complete that they scarcely had the emotional or physical strength to fight any further. Even today, many patients, especially those treated within Spire hospitals, have no individual care plan. Thousands of people are still living with the consequences of what happened. It is wishful thinking that this could not happen again."

6. The procedure is being massively over-diagnosed.

The incidence of phimosis in boys (was) 7x less frequent than the number of circumcisions that are performed for reasons of phimosis. This was first shown by Shankar and Rickwood in 1999.

Shankar KR, Rickwood AM. (1999). The Incidence of Phimosis in Boys. *British Journal of Urology International*. July;84[1], p101-102.

This was reconfirmed by Shahid in 2012. Unless this issue is addressed and there is a fundamental change in policy, we feel well within reason to claim that this diagnosis problem continues.

"Parents are often overtly anxious and over-concerned about this nonretractability in their infant or toddler. Most of these cases end up in surgical interventions in form of circumcision. Analyses of medical records carried out in England and Western Australia revealed that medically indicated circumcisions were seven times more than the expected incidence of phimosis in children less than 15 years of age [2, 3]; implying thereby that there is a high rate of unnecessary circumcisions [4]. The operation of circumcision is not devoid of adverse effects and also has a huge economic impact [1,5-7]. In order to avoid such unindicated expensive operations, it is important to elaborately redefine phimosis and know about newer non-invasive cheaper and safer treatment options."

Sukhbir Kaur Shahid. (2012). Phimosis in Children. *International Scholarly Research Network*. Volume edition: 2012, (p1-6), p1.

This is against General Medical Council's guidelines for good practice.

Knowledge skills and performance

Section 15: You must provide a good standard of practice and care. If you assess, diagnose or treat patients, you must:

1. Adequately assess the patient's conditions, taking account of their history (including the symptoms and psychological, spiritual, social and cultural factors), their views and values; where necessary, examine the patient
 2. Promptly provide or arrange suitable advice, investigations or treatment where necessary
 3. Refer a patient to another practitioner when this serves the patient's needs.
-

Appendix 1: Links to Journals & Articles

Complications of circumcision

<http://www.cirp.org/library/complications/williams-kapila/>

N. Williams, L. Kapila,

First published: October 1993

<https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.1800801005>

Abstract

Circumcision remains a common operation, with over 30000 procedures performed annually in the UK, mostly on children. The British Medical Association has recommended that circumcision should be performed only for medical reasons. Despite this, controversy exists over whether too many circumcisions are being performed. Are patients being exposed to an unnecessary operation? It may be argued that in doubtful cases it is easier to proceed to circumcision on the assumption that the attendant risks are low, but the operation is associated with a definite morbidity and rare deaths have been reported. This review considers the spectrum of complications that may result from circumcision and discusses the possible aetiological mechanisms.

Key notes

“Although haemorrhage and sepsis are the main causes of morbidity, the variety of complications is enormous. The literature abounds with reports of morbidity and even death as a result of circumcision.”

Citing Anna Freud 1952:

“any surgical interference with the child's body may serve as a focal point for the activation, reactivation, grouping, and rationalisation of ideas of being attacked, overwhelmed and (or) castrated.”

Is phimosis overdiagnosed in boys and are too many circumcisions performed in consequence?

A. Rickwood, J. Walker, Annals of the Royal College of Surgery (England), Volume 71, Number 5: Pages 275-277, September 1989.

Summary:

Thirty thousand circumcisions are performed annually in England and 70% of these are upon boys under 15 years of age. In the Mersey Region some 950 boys are circumcised each year for medical indications, the commonest being 'phimosis', which accounts for 87% of cases, of whom almost one-half are under 5 years of age. Regional practice is compared with that of our Unit, where **the majority of referrals had developmentally non-retractile foreskin rather than true phimosis**, where circumcisions for phimosis and for balanoposthitis occurred in almost equal numbers, and where no example of true phimosis was seen in boys under 5 years of age. It appears that in the Mersey Region **many boys are circumcised for development non-retractability of the prepuce rather than for true phimosis and that in consequence some two-thirds of the operations are unnecessary.**

Further Fate of the Foreskin: Incidence of Preputial Adhesions, Phimosis, and Smegma among Danish Schoolboys.

Jakob Øster, Archives of Disease in Childhood, Volume 43, Pages 200-202, April 1968.

Summary and Conclusions:

From 9545 observations of the state of the prepuce in 1968 schoolboys aged 6-17 years, examined annually for up to eight years, the following was concluded.

Physiological phimosis is a rare condition in schoolboys, and it has a tendency to regress spontaneously: **operation is rarely indicated. Clumsy attempts at retraction probably cause secondary phimosis, which then requires operation.**

Preputial non-separation ('adhesion') occurs frequently, but separation of the epithelium takes place gradually and spontaneously as a normal biological process in the course of school life and is concluded about the age of 17.

Production of smegma increases from the age of about 12-13 years. Neither this nor hygiene of the prepuce present any problems if the boys are regularly instructed.

Phimosis in Boys

AMK Rickwood, V Hemalatha, G Batcup and L Spitz, British Journal of Urology, Volume 52, Pages 147-150, April 1980.

Summary:

Phimosis, defined as scarring of the tip of the prepuce, was studied prospectively in a series of 23 boys aged 4 to 11 years. There was little to support the contention that the condition is caused by trauma, or by ammoniacal or bacterial inflammation of the prepuce, could any other aetiological factor be identified. Histological examination of the foreskin showed the appearances of Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans in 20 of the 21 specimens submitted for study.

The usual reason for referral, and the commonest indication for circumcision, is "phimosis", but experience suggests that this condition is over-diagnosed and many unnecessary circumcisions performed in consequence. True, from its Greek derivation (φιμωσις, muzzling), the term might be applied whenever the foreskin cannot be retracted to reveal the glans penis, but Gairdner (1949) demonstrated that in young boys non-retractability of the foreskin is a normal finding and is due to the persistence of developmental adhesions between glans and prepuce. These break down spontaneously with the passage of time and, without interference, full retractability of the foreskin can be expected in almost all boys by their early teens (Oster, 1968).

The incidence of phimosis in boys.

K Shankar, A Rickwood, BJU Int. 1999 Jul;84(1):101-2.

Conclusions:

The incidence of pathological phimosis in boys was 0.4 cases/1000 boys per year, or 0.6% of boys affected by their 15th birthday, a value lower than previous estimates and exceeded more than eight-fold by the proportion of English boys currently circumcised for 'phimosis'.

Frenulum Sparing Circumcision: Step-By-Step Approach of a Novel Technique

Sunil Purshotham Shenoy, Prashanth Kallaje Marla, Pritham Sharma, Narayana Bhat, and Amrith Raj Rao

This article has been cited by other articles in PMC

J Clin Diagn Res. 2015 Dec; 9(12): PC01–PC03.

Published online 2015 Dec 1. doi: [10.7860/JCDR/2015/14972.6860](https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2015/14972.6860)

PMCID: PMC4717729

PMID: [26816940](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26816940/)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4717729/>

Abstract

Objective

Circumcision, by most conventional methodologies, involves division of the frenulum and excision of the entire foreskin covering the glans. This seemingly simple procedure is occasionally associated with dreadful and devastating complications. We describe a new frenulum-sparing technique that circumvents some of the potential complications of conventional techniques and could also potentially help preserve preputial role in sexual function.

Materials and Methods

An initial dorsal slit, three fourths of the way up to the corona is extended laterally and obliquely on either side, to meet the preputial edge, 3-4 mm from the frenulum. A broad sleeve of sub-coronal mucosa is thus preserved. The frenulum is left untouched, leaving a wide skin bridge connecting the mucosal sleeve with the shaft skin. The raw area is closed with interrupted, synthetic absorbable sutures. Over a three year period, 42 patients were circumcised using this technique.

Results

No significant complications like frenular bleed, painful postoperative erections, chordee, meatal stenosis, or urethra-cutaneous fistula were observed in any patient. The cosmetic results were pleasing.

Conclusion

The frenulum-sparing technique of circumcision is a promising modification to the various existing techniques. The method described is technically easier to perform than conventional frenulum-dividing procedures and has an acceptable cosmesis. Further randomised controlled studies on larger cohorts are necessary to establish the true benefits of this technique over established procedures.

Keywords: Complications, Frenular artery, Prepuce, Phimosis

Appendix 2: Stories

The following stories are not to be reproduced in any way and are for the education and benefit of the direct recipient of this document. They are intended to give an example of the types of problems that our correspondents deal with. These were offered voluntarily by correspondents with the knowledge and consent that they may be shared, however any reproduction of this material must be discussed with 15 Square.

“My dad's entire family is of the Jewish faith, and the idea of forgoing circumcision was never even an option that dawned on him.”

I saw your post on Reddit. Feel free to publish the following letter!

I am twenty years old, and I was genitally mutilated within the first several days of my life. My dad's entire family is of the Jewish faith, and the idea of forgoing circumcision was never even an option that dawned on him. In fact, I was cut by the same mohel who mutilated my dad more than thirty years earlier, a fact which my grandparents are quite proud of.

I don't remember a time before I knew I was circumcised. My parents always told me that the foreskin was a superfluous piece of skin that did little more than cause frequent infections, and that circumcision was very important to men's health. For years I took those words at face value.

However, within the last few years I came across forums about the morals of circumcision. At first I was perplexed. Surely removing a superfluous piece of skin wasn't that huge a deal, right? However, more research revealed to me the truth about circumcision and the foreskin. It turns out that not only are the supposed infections caused by the foreskin are rare and easily preventable, but the foreskin is one of the more erogenous zones of the male body, and that it protects the glans of the penis to ensure it is comfortable and of an appropriate sensitivity. Suddenly a lot of the struggles I was facing made sense. I always assumed that chafing against underwear was a universal part of the male experience, but in actuality there's supposed to be a part of the body protecting from that. I always thought masturbation was uncomfortable for everyone, but it turned out that if my body wasn't mutilated my foreskin would prevent this feeling. (That isn't just an unfortunate side effect by the way; the complications which circumcision brings to the act of masturbation are the very reason why circumcision was popularized in the sex-negative early twentieth century world!) I assumed that the male body simply wasn't equipped to be especially sexually satisfied, but there's actually a huge piece of skin that's supposed to bring pleasure. And I thought that the penis was simply an ugly, awkward looking part of the body, but seeing pictures of intact penises made me realize that the body part in its natural state looks much less weird. And why wouldn't it? The glans isn't supposed to be an external organ. If one was to peel the skin off of one's fingers, the resultant fingers wouldn't look so pleasant to look at either.

I love my parents very much, so I hate to face the truth about what they allowed to happen to me. I can't believe they let me lose the vast majority of my sexual pleasure through an extremely painful process that most tribes in the prehistoric era already recognized was unjust. I don't blame them; they were raised in an environment that normalized the disgusting procedure. I'm sure

most slave owners two hundred years ago didn't see their actions as morally wrong either. I'm sure parents who foot bound their daughters in olden China didn't think they were doing anything wrong either. But that didn't stop the countries from speaking up against the injustices, and now that we're removed from the societal sugar coating of past eras we can recognize how horrible those practices are. My hope is that by the end of my lifetime, my children and grandchildren will be saying the same thing about male genital mutilation.

"It oftentimes feels like nobody outside of the few online circumcision communities are listening to our feelings."

I saw your post in r/CircumcisionGrief by a user that linked to [this article](#). It oftentimes feels like nobody outside of the few online circumcision communities are listening to our feelings. Thank you for helping to remind us relatively few dissenters that special people really do care.

1. Your age.

I am eighteen. My name is --.

2. Your background and reason for circumcision, if known.

My parents are catholic, but I've spoken with my mother face to face about why she circumcised me. It boiled down to them wanting me to look like my father, everyone they knew having done it, and them believing that it wasn't wrong and would protect me from STD's and HIV.

3. How old were you when you received your circumcision?

Short story: 6.5 months old, give or take a few days.

Long Story: I was 14 weeks premature, so they had to wait before circumcising me unlike a normal baby which they cut after a day or two. To make a long story short I am completely healthy and have none of the severe health defects that a baby born that premature usually has. My parents said it was a miracle that I was healthy. That just makes it worse that the second I was out of immediate danger and they knew I was perfectly healthy, they went ahead and chopped off part of my penis when nothing was medically wrong with it. I hypothesize that the difference in age between the average baby when they are mutilated and when I was mutilated has resulted in a different amount of flesh being retained on my penis due to my growth over 6.5 months.

4. How do you feel circumcision has affected your life?

I envy men with whole penises. They have better sensation, function, appearance, and they do not have the knowledge that someone violated their right to their own body by strapping them down and cutting them. I got a high and loose cut so the skin rests just barely on the corona of my genitalia when flaccid. The difference in sensation, look, and function, between that skin which has had no foreskin protecting it my whole life and the corona of my genitals that has had some protection is enormously noticeable.

5. How has your circumcision affected your relationships with others, (e.g. partners, parents or religious/cultural community?)

I don't hate my parents for cutting me, but I'll never let go of my kernel of resentment. They thought it would help and protect me. The doctor said it was fine after all. How were they to know any different?

6. As many other details and thoughts that you wish to share

It is NOT antisemitic for me to want to protect a child from ritual genital cutting, be they a boy or a girl. Religion is no justification for depriving someone of the right to their own body and putting them at risk of infection, death, sexual dysfunction, chronic depression, and lifelong hate for their parents and society for effectively branding them at birth. Some people don't like when I use the word.

Everyone has a goal in life. Some people want riches. Some people want to spread the word of god. Some people want to find love. Mine is distinctly more unpopular. I intend to see circumcision abolished in my lifetime and I am deathly serious about it.

"I feel I am missing out on something as the foreskin has all the nerve endings in it, and the head of my penis has become less sensitive due to the rubbing on my underwear."

I would like to share my story about my Circumcision. I was about 13 years old when I had the procedure done for medical reasons.

I can remember it being very painful after I woke up from the operation. But once it all healed I thought nothing more about it. Except about a year later when I had a cyst on my penis from where there was still some matter in my scars.

That was all sorted out. And again I thought nothing more of it. Until I became sexually active. Since then I feel I am missing out on something as the foreskin has all the nerve endings in it. And the head of my penis has become less sensitive due to the rubbing on my underwear.

I am nearly 40 years old. And I feel Circumcision should not be done unless it is absolutely necessary. I had to have it done for medical reasons.

But for religion and cosmetic reasons, I think it should stop.

“Those who perform circumcisions have created generations of men who are embittered, confused, distrustful, angry, and sexually shattered by having their choice and bodily integrity ignored and their experiences, like the foreskin itself: erased.”

Hi 15 Square,

Below you'll find my experience living as a circumcised male, how it has affected me, and how I can move forward from it. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am glad organizations like this are listening to men when so much of their experiences with circumcision have been silenced or ignored. I'm of course open to suggestions for edits, etc.

Soon after my birth, a doctor came in to my mother's hospital room and recommended I be circumcised "to prevent infection" (according to my mother). I was taken to the nursery where my legs and arms were strapped down and my foreskin forcibly excised from my genitals. Parents weren't allowed in the nursery. I don't remember the pain, being so young. But then, that seemed to be the point of doing it at that age. Years later, I asked my mother what her thinking was during that moment. Her response was, "What? Are you all pissed off you were circumcised?" I think her reaction is common among parents who didn't think they had done anything wrong at the time, among parents reluctant to face the possibility that they may have made a grave and ghastly error, among other men conditioned to interpret their circumcision as a cosmetic blessing, among women used to seeing only - and therefore normalizing - circumcised penises. The core reaction behind my mother's words is symptomatic of cultures that have learned to ignore male infant suffering and to scoff at those who have awakened to the knowledge of what was done to them, and continues to be done to men and women across the world.

At the time, my mother had legal consent over my body. I cannot blame her; I cannot forgive her. A parent's primary responsibility is to protect and guard their child from harm. At all costs. Parents who surrender their children to doctors who perpetuate falsities about circumcision's "benefits" have effectually abrogated their duty to their children. My mother blindly trusted in doctors who were perhaps themselves just as blind as she was. "That's just what was done," she told me. "That's what everyone does." Without thought, without question. Ignorance explains; it doesn't excuse. I want to be understanding, but so much has already been lost.

We need a new cultural assumption. We must assume that the parent is not the patient; the child is. To willingly cause harm to a non-consenting human should be seen as a gross violation of the very idea of medicinal practice.

I have had in my life numerous (hetero)sexual relationships. Over the years, my partners seemed to be experiencing an intensity I myself never felt. At first, I couldn't explain why my glans was virtually insensitive. Why it was painful after ejaculation. Why I wasn't experiencing what was so common for others. I was raised to believe circumcision was normal, so I assumed something must be wrong with me. After all, the penis is only a delivery system for sperm and men naturally don't experience sexual desire or pleasure the same way women do - so I was told. My path to educating myself about my own sexual anatomy was long, a journey of doubt and frustration

and shock, a journey that I hope one day will issue in some form of acceptance for the body that was left me.

Much of this self-education happens in silence; many turn off when you raise the subject or try to get their viewpoint. I've heard the myths and bromides and dismissals. "It's like cutting the umbilical cord." "It's just a little snip." "It's cleaner and girls like it more." "Well, your father and all your brothers are circumcised, so...." "You don't even remember it." "It prevents penile cancer and AIDS." "Babies cry, it's what they do." "Get over it." I have viewed male circumcisions before. And the clinical coldness with which the doctor or religious practitioner performs the procedure, while the newborn screams and fights against his restraints, fills me with the kind of disgust toward ideologies that are allowed to go unquestioned. That this procedure is allowed to continue to this day - language buckles under its horror and stupidity.

Whenever I look at my sexual organ - the absent frenulum, the chafed and desensitized glans, the scar tissue that runs along the shaft to the dead pink of my senseless corona - I am reminded of what was taken from me, and the life and experiences I will never have. I see the stranger who strapped me down, covered me with a sheet so that my infant genitals were available for a procedure few people see or understand, and I see my foreskin sliced away from my body, discarded or sold or left to fester in a bin before the trash is taken out to some anonymous lot. Those who perform circumcisions have created generations of men who are embittered, confused, distrustful, angry, and sexually shattered by having their choice and bodily integrity ignored and their experiences, like the foreskin itself, erased.

I am angry. And no amount of theological justification or medical insistence on "hygienic purposes" or "prevention of infection" or any amount of social normalization of male genital mutilation can redress what I and so many have been robbed of. Victims of insidious harvesting practices. Victims of gross misinformation. Victims of parents who believe they "own" their child's body. I cannot "get over it." Circumcision is not normal, and I, along with innumerable others, am the living proof of it. I am angry, but anger is also fuel. My hope is that, in its small way, this anger can turn the tide. So that I may one day live in a world where the very idea of circumcision strikes every human heart as it should: as a disgusting, barbaric, and ghastly violation of human rights that robs from non-consenting persons the choice of their bodily integrity and sexual futures.

I live in America. Laws against female circumcision were passed here in 1996, making the practice a felony. To date, there are no protections for newborn boys. Their sexual integrity and their natural sexual development are in complete control of the parents/guardians, who are often uninformed or misinformed by doctors and nurses who have been conditioned to believe the foreskin is just "extra skin," or by unscrupulous medical practitioners incentivized to harvest male foreskins for interferon research or for cosmetic corporations. These are documented practices. That my foreskin was potentially used so corporations could sell overpriced facials leaves me with a sense of aggrieved horror I cannot begin to fathom.

Today, in my early thirties, age has considerably diminished what sensitivity I had as a youth. I live in the fear that my sexual organ will become a senseless husk, a shadow of the shadow I was left with when I was first taken home. When my parents were told Vaseline would take care of the wound I should never have suffered, yet am forced to carry until my dying day. I'm considering foreskin regeneration, a process that takes years, is unpredictable in its effects, and can only come so close to returning a man's sexual organ to its originally intended sensitivity. Like so many men, I

am forced to right a wrong that should never have been committed in the first place. But I am glad we have options. I cannot speak for all men, but I have felt their pain and their loss, because it is mine. We may not ever recover what was taken from us, but we can prevent future generations of young boys and men from the suffering that comes from the practice of male genital mutilation.

“This has always caused me physical and psychological discomfort. The procedure was unnecessary and has impacted my life significantly... I have never discussed this with anyone.”

Hi 15 Square, I just saw the webpage 'we want to hear your story' on the 15 Square website. I did write to 15 Square in November and received some good advice from David. My story is below. Please feel free to use this in your campaign & good luck!

Thank you for all the great work you do.

I am male, in my 40's and have only recently discovered your organisation. My parents had me circumcised when I was 11. This has always caused me physical and psychological discomfort. The procedure was unnecessary and has impacted my life significantly.

My parents are Methodist - not a religion that practises circumcision. I have never discussed this with anyone.

Recently, my situation has bothered me even more. I wonder whether I should discuss this with my parents. They are in good health, but 'not young'. We are very close and they have done so much for me. I don't want to upset them or divide us.

I would love to meet the right woman and have a family of my own. My school friends and many of my work colleagues have done just that. They probably wonder why I haven't. The answer lies mainly in confidence, or lack of it, based on failed relationships at university and in early career.

In February of my final year at junior school - I had some discomfort passing urine on two successive days. My mum took me to the GP who prescribed some tablets (no idea what they were).

Here is a timeline of my experiences:

March - no issues.

April - no issues. I had my 11th birthday and went on a 1-week school trip with tablets.

May - no issues. My mum took me back to the GP but I'm not sure why.

June - no issues.

July - no issues. Then my parents told me I would have a small operation to remove a little bit of skin in the first week of the holidays. This would allow lots of time to recover before I started senior school. I would probably be in and out of hospital in a day, and this would mean that there would be no repeat of the discomfort I felt earlier in the year.

Week three in July. I was circumcised in the local hospital under general anaesthetic. It was horrible waking up to see the bandages, then subsequently discovering the damaged tissue, covered in dissolvable stitches. It was very painful. After I had passed urine, I was allowed home that evening. In the weeks that followed, I wore a makeshift guard or a cricket box, and never left the house. At first it was painful to walk, and the wound wept considerably all over the guard or box.

August - I attended outpatient's appointments with my mum at the hospital, and my treatment was concluded.

September - Although I was mutilated, I could walk normally, play sport and go to the toilet without any issues. I started at an all-boys senior school which was a double hit to my development - I would hardly see the girls from junior school until we were reunited at sixth form five years later. I didn't go to football trials in case anyone saw me. I loved football but I knew I was different.

As the years progressed, I began to realise what had happened and the impact on relationships. At sixth form I found it very tough as I did in my first year at university. I found it hard to study, possibly because I wasn't socialising as I should because I was preoccupied by my appearance & functionality. Going out on the town - discovering pubs & clubs, dating, A-levels, sport and more combined to make life difficult. Eventually, I learned to muddle through or even pretend the issue didn't exist. I joined football teams, but never had a shower, even in the middle of January! And nothing's changed!

Towards the end of university I went out with a girl I really liked for about 3 months. One day she asked me why I was different, had I had an operation? was I Jewish? I fell silent. I just put up a brick wall and went into my cave. Two days later and 4 hours before the graduation ceremony, she finished with me. This was really hard on the day, and as a legacy over the following decades.

Well meaning work colleagues tell me to "just get a girlfriend!" Kids in the school where I work ask, "are you a daddy?" Parents who are my age and younger greet me at the classroom door. I go to friends' weddings as a lone guest. They must all wonder why I've no wife & kids of my own.

2018/2019:

I have not had a relationship for years. I've discovered Foregen (real hope but when?), 15 Square and Men Do Complain. I almost attended the 15 Square summertime event or 2019 AGM, but wasn't bold enough. Recently, I went to my current GP for another unrelated issue, and drew breath to mention my circumcision and any possible reconstruction. This was a different GP & practice to that of my childhood. Would he take me seriously? Sadly, no words came out & I left.

There is a lot of talk at work about mental health & sharing your problems, so I wonder whether it is time to communicate more openly, at least with those closest to me? But how, when? And what about the risks of embarrassment, or being seen as weird or upsetting my parents? Maybe I could start with my little sister? - she may be completely unaware of what happened, but we are close and she is a great listener.

Thank you.

"I attribute its effects to everything from ADD to depression & anxiety. It made me create a mental aversion to intimacy and to think of sex as something shameful or something that shouldn't be openly discussed. I never feel sexually satisfied."

1. Your age.

31

2. Your background and reason for circumcision, if known.

White, middle class, routine/medical

3. How old were you when you received your circumcision?

0

4. How do you feel circumcision has affected your life?

I feel like it has impacted me in so many ways. I felt like the minority, like I was missing something. It made me insecure. Learning about the procedure made me realise how painful and traumatic it is. This has given me broader insight into the psychological damage that it has done to me. I attribute its effects to everything from ADD to depression & anxiety. It made me create a mental aversion to intimacy and to think of sex as something shameful or something that shouldn't be openly discussed. I never feel sexually satisfied.

5. How has your circumcision affected your relationships with others, (e.g. partners, parents or religious/cultural community?)

It has made me resentful of the doctor and of those who advocate it or are ignorant of the effects. Women I have been with have expected me to be circumcised. It has affected my relationships romantically too (because of the combination of anti-depressants and a thorough circumcision) it is very hard for me to finish which women take as a reflection on them. They also become irritated that it takes me so long to orgasm.

"If they just wanted me to look like the rest of the family, then I am mentally troubled. I suspect that, even if I could access my medical records, I would not find the answer."

Hello

You offered the opportunity for me to share my experience. I found writing this very helpful, maybe others have the same experience, I would be interested to know. You are welcome to publish any part you wish. Is there a page where I can read the experience of other men?

I am currently 59 years old. I am unclear if the background was medical or family tradition, probably a bit of both i.e. as soon as a medical reason could be found it was used to have me circumcised. At the time I was the only boy in the family, father and grandfather were both circumcised.

The operation happened in 1965 or 1966 when I was either 4 or 5 years old. The reason I know this, many years later I recall my father telling a story about a new camera and showing a picture of me on the Aust Ferry slipway with a partially built Severn Bridge behind me. There is picture of Bob Dylan standing in the same place – No Direction Home. Apparently, I was not allowed food or drinks that morning, and he was trying to keep me occupied. It is funny how you remember certain words, years later he was showing the picture to his friend and said – ‘that was taken the day that he was circumcised’. Why did he feel the need to share that detail?

If there is a theme to my memories, it is the lack of dignity.

I don't have any memories of visits to a Doctor, although I do have a memory of a school medical check-up in the infant school. Me and two other boys were taken to one side, the other two were crying their eyes out but don't know why.

I recall the day at the hospital. A few days before I was taken to a shop and my mum bought a toy for me. It was a snorkel type fire engine. Something I had wanted for ages and took it with me. There was a waiting room full of boys and mums. I guess it would be logical for all the appointments to be at the same time, but it makes it less personal. A bit like farm animals being lined up to be branded.

A nurse came in, everyone had to get undressed and wait in a towel. No dignity. It is indeed funny how memories work. The nurse came around, asked your age, the older boys had to have an injection (we used to call it a needle in those days), I did not have to have it but it is ironic how I did not know that I was about to have the skin cut off the end of my willy, but was terrified of a needle in the arm.

My only other memory that day was of being put on a trolley, a black mask put over my face and told to blow into it hard. I must have had a terrified look on my face.

Memories after the operation were no less unpleasant.

They made a bed in the front room, a room that was only every used for parties and Christmas, grandmother and aunties used to visit to see how I was. I refused to wee for days, they would make me stand in front of a bucket in the middle of the living room, I kept refusing.

The only pain I can remember was having the bandages off. Another day at the hospital. Eventually I got put in a bath and the bandages were soaked until they could be cut off.

Childhood memories of being the odd one out in school were the most painful.

How do I feel about it?

The question that haunts me is “why”.

I would not mind if there was a genuine medical reason, even if there was a medical cure today using creams which was not available in 1960's I would be OK. But, if it was just in case there were any more problems, and rather than putting cream on and waiting they just cut it off, or if they just wanted me to look like the rest of the family, then I am mentally troubled. I suspect that, even if I could access my medical records, I would not find the answer.

How has it affected me?

I hated being the odd one out in school and then, when a little older, in gym showers etc. I have got used to it in the last 10 years but still would not want to get undressed with a group of people I know. I am also very self-conscious when standing at urinals.

Also, I used to be conscious of it in front of girlfriends, and I would make every effort to avoid them seeing me soft. Most girlfriends did not care, many did not know much about it although one girlfriend clearly did not like it.

As a parent, my son kept getting infections, he went to the doctor many times and kept coming back with creams. The doctor told us he might need “a small operation”. It was not a pleasant task putting the cream on him, but I did it diligently to avoid the need for the operation. Maybe if I had the same cream my story would be different.

“No-one gave us any information about the physical and psychological trauma that it would cause our boys... I remember the day of their circumcision like it was yesterday. Deep down I didn't want to do it, but there was an invisible pressure willing me on.”

Male Circumcision – A Parent's Perspective

Way back in the summer of 2008, my eldest son (then 6 ½) had been complaining for some time about his ‘willy’ hurting him and feeling tight when he went for a wee. We took him to our GP who advised circumcision as the best treatment. We said that we may have considered this in the future as we are Muslims. We then asked if our other son (then 2 ½) might suffer from the same issue? If so, they could be circumcised together. The GP said that circumcisions were only performed for medical, not cultural or religious, reasons. She referred both boys to the hospital. At no time did she suggest an alternative treatment and we (in our ignorance) did not ask.

When the boys were examined at the hospital, they were both diagnosed with Phimosis and we received an appointment for the circumcision procedure for the end of October 2008 (3 months after our initial appointment with the GP). I just wish that we had asked more questions, researched the alternatives and not been so willing to go along with what the specialists said. The only risks we were ever advised of was surrounding the anaesthetic and bleeding after the operation. No-one gave us any information about the physical and psychological trauma that it would

cause our boys. No-one told us that it was unnecessary and it would affect their sexual pleasure and destroy millions of nerves in the most sensitive organ of the body. No-one even suggested that we leave it a while and have a think about it. They thought they were doing us a favour as muslims - that it was a mutual agreement! We didn't even realise until 6 months ago that Phimosis is natural and that the foreskin separates from the head of the penis usually during puberty (between 12 and 18 years of age). How could we have been so ignorant and blind?

I remember the day of their circumcision like it was yesterday. Deep down I didn't want to do it, but there was an invisible pressure willing me on. It was the normal practice for boys in my husband's country. No-one ever questions it there. We had the added belief that our eldest had a medical need for it and that our other son could also develop the same problem. We naively thought that they could support each other through it.

The boys were in a room on their own. When they came round from the anaesthetic they seemed ok at first, just a bit sleepy. I was more worried about them not waking up from the anaesthetic than the life-changing harm that the circumcision had caused. How ridiculous was that? When the pain relief started to wear off, I realised just how much pain they were in. They couldn't bear to wear pants or allow anything to rub against their penis. My eldest's penis actually got infected afterwards too. They couldn't bear to wear clothes over their genitals and having a bath was a nightmare!

However, slowly the scars healed and I thought the worst was over. I thought they could carry on with life as normal now. I couldn't have been more wrong! In the summer of 2019, my youngest son said that he wanted to speak to us about something. He said that he had been angry for a while about being circumcised. It was completely out of the blue for us. He said that when he had looked at FGM in PSHE at school, he started to question why female circumcision was illegal, but male circumcision was legal and acceptable. At first, we said that he was exaggerating and that his dad had been circumcised and that it hadn't affected him at all! It took months of angry exchanges with both sons, lots of research and viewing documentaries like 'A Cut Too Far? Male Circumcision' by the BBC and 'American Circumcision' to begin to realise the full impact of our decision in 2008. We searched for support groups to help us to deal with the issues in our family. It was tearing us apart! We found 15 Square and I started e-mailing David Smith. We had a video call with him (as we couldn't meet him due to Coronavirus) and this really helped the boys. We became members of 15 Square and vowed to share our story in the hope that people are better informed about circumcision and its devastating effects.

Lucky for my boys (now aged 14 & 18), they are in the process of restoring their foreskin and are slowly beginning to find a glimmer of hope; amongst the extreme trauma they have suffered. We have requested their hospital records and now intend to make a complaint at the highest level for the misinformation and deception exhibited by the specialists responsible for the male genital mutilation of our boys. I cannot turn back the clock by 12 years for them, but I can seek justice on their behalf and change the future for other victims like them.

"I hate it and it's affected my sex life. I am envious of partners sometimes and I hate my parents for letting it happen, as well as the surgeon that did it. I wish it had never happened."

I am 27 years old, and I was circumcised at 18 months old for phimosis.

I hate it and it's affected my sex life. I am envious of partners sometimes and I hate my parents for letting it happen, as well as the surgeon that did it. I wish it had never happened.

"When it dawned on me after about a week or two of what I had had done I went into deep shock. I could not possibly see a way forward for myself. I was suicidal. At this point I needed help which is a difficult thing to find on this matter. I was in absolute distress the sort I had never encountered. I was left with diminished sensitivity and was unable to facilitate an orgasm through masturbation for 11 months."

I was circumcised at age 46 in 2018. I am not religious and I had a medical circumcision. I had had a Frenuloplasty in my thirties which had helped but was not definitive in solving my phimosis. I was always very apprehensive toward circumcision surgery and not without good reason as I am now most painfully aware. I had a circumcision booked with the NHS in the year leading up to my private operation but backed out of the operation post consultation due to nerves and hopefully having more control over things at a private clinic. I had what was described as a partial circumcision. Partial sounds good in that less skin may be taken at time of surgery but the end result for me unfortunately was like having a part of your sexuality removed which triggered a strong psychological reaction in my case.

When it dawned on me after about a week or two of what I had had done I went into deep shock. I could not possibly see a way forward for myself. I was suicidal. At this point I needed help which is a difficult thing to find on this matter. I was in absolute distress the sort I had never encountered. I was left with diminished sensitivity and was unable to facilitate an orgasm through masturbation for 11 months.

As for personal relations my confidence has been decimated. On raising these issues with the surgeons/clinic their response implied I was suffering from pre-existing mental issues. The foreskin is highly erogenous tissue packed with nerve endings which if removed can cause serious loss of sensitivity which can take years to adapt to personally. I definitely made a huge personal error preceding with the operation. Yes, there are warnings in paperwork and pre op consent forms relating to sensitivity loss and altered states but what I strongly feel is they are not adequate and that the preputioplasty operation should be tried first at all times before circumcision.

If the NHS and other organisations knew the full extent of suffering some men experience from this operation and took note they would not prescribe circumcision unless 100% necessary and perform a preputioplasty operation as a default procedure. The preputioplasty operation was not available on the NHS in my area at the time and I feel strongly that this is a main factor in my personal timeline that could have avoided my current situation. I had two consultations, an NHS and private one. What I should have been told by both NHS and private consultants is that I should approach circumcision with great caution. It has caused me great reduction in sexual sensitivity, severe body dysmorphia, extreme psychological distress which I can not necessarily see an end to. I turned to family members and close friends for help. Nothing could reassure my personal state, in fact nothing is really the same as before, circumcision has been very personally damaging.

The official documentation/information to inform men of all the complications or negative effects resulting from this procedure are woefully inadequate. As far as I am concerned circumcision is a wrongful procedure that leaves a man in a wholly unnatural state.

Recovery.

My GP worked with me fairly well, but I was never truly understood. At first I was prescribed diazepam as my distress was extreme. Later antidepressants. The NHS mental health system took 1 year to administer mental health care which was a basic firefighting response 12 months after I really needed it. The only people who have any idea how badly damaged you are, are other men who have been circumcised. So with that very true fact in mind, how can an urologist/surgeon possibly advise you of any possible negative side effects? They can't! 99.9% of them either have a foreskin or have had it removed in infancy. The experience of adult circumcision has been terrible. I am sure that a dangerous proportion of men circumcised as adults are badly affected by this procedure. I am now off the antidepressants but feel now that I am still in need of medication due to uncontrollable depressive events and mood swings. I'm not saying I was a model for mental health wellbeing before the op, but now I have quite serious problems indeed. I am slowly recovering with the help of foreskin restoration and hope to be fully restored by the time 3 years have passed post operation.

Restoration.

By the time 6 weeks had passed after my op. I had discovered foreskin restoration movements in the US.<http://www.restoringforeskin.org/> user uberestoroo. At the time of writing this I have gained 15mm of inner foreskin and am growing more tissue at about 1 - 2mm per month. The movement in America, fuelled as some may know bizarrely by the mutilation of about 50% of their boys at birth. I am a dedicated foreskin restorer. It is the only thing that gives me any hope to improve my situation, and I can thankfully say that it does improve things over time and makes you feel much more in control and on the road to being whole again. I recommend it for all circumcised men who are not happy with their situations. So, with what I now know about tissue expansion from foreskin restoration, I, in hindsight, could have rectified my phimosis without surgical intervention by making a homemade mechanical device to hold the foreskin open with adjustable tension. This could be worn daily over many months and would have solved my problem. In the past I tried 2 foreskin stretching devices called novoglan and phimocure. Neither are fit for purpose and have flawed design. The NHS prescribe creams and stretching methods to help cure phimosis but the direction and instruction on how to do this and how long this will take are inadequate. My experience has of course made me very aware of infantile circumcision, who performs

it and why ie. which countries, religious bodies etc. I cannot fathom why it is tolerated in modern society. It is without doubt genital mutilation.

Thank you for reading my story.