

A systematic review of the socio-demographic variables associated with male attitudes towards female genital mutilation (FGM)

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Background

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a traditional practice involving the alteration of female genital organs for non-medical reasons, most popular in Sub-Saharan Africa
- It is associated with a plethora of medical and psychological complications
- Despite its illegality, it remains a growing concern in Australia due to the recent influx of migrants from FGM practicing countries
- Identifying the socio-demographic factors fueling the continuation of FGM may highlight avenues of intervention

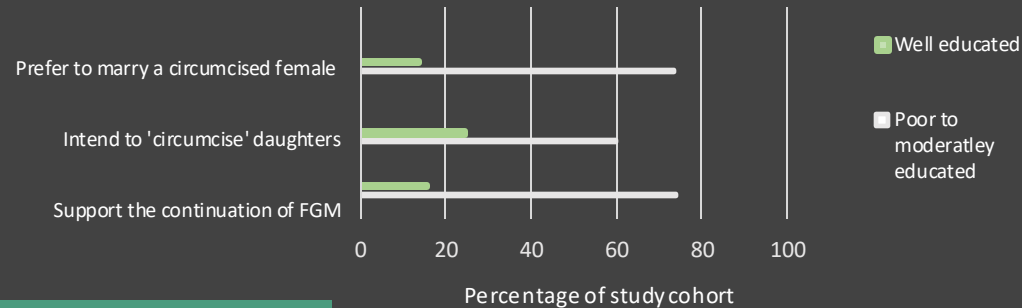
Methods

- A systematic review of literature was conducted on quantitative studies analysing questionnaire-based surveys which assessed the male perception of FGM
- Perceptions of FGM were analysed via three main parameters; support for continuation of FGM, whether participants preferred to marry a female who had undergone FGM and whether they were planning to 'circumcise' their daughters
- These findings were then correlated with socio-demographic variables including age, ethnicity, religion and education

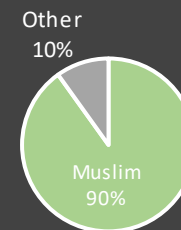
Results

- Seven studies were analysed in this review with a total of 3820 male participants. All studies were conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa with local, male respondents
- Overall there was a strong attitudinal support for FGM varying from 30-76% of the included cohorts.
- Assessment of parameters varied amongst studies, however a strong association between low educational status and attitudinal support for FGM was apparent across the literature

Education level vs Attitudinal support for FGM



Nominated religious background



Conclusion

- Having poor educational levels and being of the Muslim faith were the most influential socio-demographic variables for FGM
- Muslim participants report religious obligation as a driving motivator for the continuation of FGM, demonstrating the need to involve religious clergy in anti-FGM interventions
- Minimal exposure to formal education is associated with a limited understanding of the consequences of FGM, contributing to its continuation in this cohort
- Educating and engaging males in anti-FGM interventions is strongly associated with a low intention to practice (aOR=0.56, 95% CI 0.42-0.98)
- Educational interventions should be implemented into the Sub-Saharan African male migrant community within Australia to aid in the abolishment of the practice.