

Female genital mutilation narrative essay

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Female genital mutilation (FGM) is to this day a current issue in many societies and cultures. The WorldHealthOrganization (WHO) defines female genital mutilation as " all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. " In this paper I will argue that female genital mutilation is an antiquated and unseemly practice and should be promptly discontinued.

Nussbaum draws from first-hand experiences of victims in order to provide first hand evidence of the exact feelings, routines, and positions that people (mostly women) in the main countries in which FGM is practiced. Nussbaum dispels the obvious argument of her position being considered “ ethnocentric” by engaging in the overall health concerns and issues that the act of FGM can cause women. In this way she criticizes the way in which FGM can affect women both physically and psychologically, rather than its place in their cultures.

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She mentions examples of people living in countries in which FGM is illegal that are opposed to FGM, and fought for their children’s right to choice and consent, though it is the cultural norm. To summarize, Nussbaum’s position on FGM is plain and simple: FGM is a problem and that something needs to be done about it, namely through education and the enforcement of laws, which are in most cases, are already in place.

FGM is, according to WHO, said to have been performed in one of three commonly practiced ways on between “ approximately 85 and 115 million women” The three types of afore mentioned genital mutations are as follows: “ Clitoridectomy, a part or the whole clitoris is amputated... In excision, both the clitoris and the inner lips are amputated... In infibulation, the clitoris is removed, some or all of the labia minora are cut off, and incisions are made in the labia majora to create raw surface. These surfaces are either stitched together or held in contact until they heal as a hood of skin that covers the urethra and most of the vagina. ” These gruesome amputations are made worse by the fact that they are generally performed with no anesthetic, local or otherwise. Additionally the conditions in which they are performed are by no means clean, and the tools used to perform such operations are sharpened rocks or razorblades, though there is not usually a means to sanitize them. Bringing an end to FGM is in no more ethnocentric than treating AIDS in countries that have to means to treat their citizens.

It is a cruel and unusual punishment that is masked as being a procedure of purity. The pain alone is reason enough not to perform FGM on young girls, let alone the extreme risk of infection or even death, not to mention the long-term life altering effects it has. “ Infection, hemorrhage, and abscess at the time of the operation; later difficulties in urination and menstruation; stones in the urethra and bladder due to repeated infections... infertility, obstructed labor and damaging rips and tears during childbirth. Of the effects suffered by women who undergo FGM, none are complications that a man would even remotely suffer from circumcision. Male circumcision is the

cutting of the foreskin and while painful, as any surgical procedure surely is, is often done on babies before memories of such an event can be performed. While more often than not, performed without consent, circumcision has religious roots, specifically in Judaism. “ Male circumcision is one of the oldest and most common surgical procedures worldwide, and is undertaken for many reasons: religious, cultural, social and medical. Additionally there are benefits to male circumcision, “ there is conclusive evidence from observational data and three randomized controlled trials that circumcised men have a significantly lower risk of becoming infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). ” Male circumcision counters FGM, as there have been no positive qualities found. Though male circumcision does not generally achieve consent from the men that it is performed on, it can be beneficial. The practice of FGM dates back centuries with no clear beginning and zero benefits to the women it is performed on.

Though with enough exposure to the health risks and dangers, sexual equality, as well as the enforcement of, and in some cases stricter laws, FGM could one day become an ultimately antiquated practice with little to no hold on the world. ----- [1]. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html> [2]. May, Larry, Kai Wong, and Jill Delston, eds. *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*. 5th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011. Pg. 13) [3]. May, Larry, Kai Wong, and Jill Delston, eds. *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*. 5th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011. (Pg. 13) [4]. May, Larry, Kai Wong, and Jill Delston, eds. *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*. 5th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011. (Pg. 14) [5]. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html>

int/reproductivehealth/publications/rtis/9789241596169/en/ [6]. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/rtis/9789241596169/en/>