



PERSON-CENTRED COMMUNICATION FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION PREVENTION

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE FOR
TRAINING HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS

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Person-centred communication for female genital mutilation prevention: a facilitator's guide for training health-care providers

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ABBREVIATIONS

FGM	female genital mutilation
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICM	International Confederation of Midwives
VMMC	voluntary medical male circumcision
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

Over 200 million girls and women worldwide are estimated to be living with the effects of female genital mutilation (FGM). The practice is still being reported in 30 countries in Africa, and in a few countries in Asia and the Middle East. The rise in international migration has also increased the number of girls and women around the world who have undergone or may undergo the practice (1).

Evidence shows that FGM can cause several physical, mental and sexual health complications in girls and women, and in newborns (1,2). Health-care providers play an important role in supporting girls and women living with FGM, and improving their health and well-being. They are in a unique position to influence and change the attitudes of their patients about FGM. This is a key step towards preventing new cases of FGM in their communities (3). Yet, health-care providers often lack the necessary support and training to fulfil these important roles.

Complicating the issue, there has been an rising trend in recent years of health-care providers doing FGM. Known as “FGM medicalization”, this is often done under the pretext of harm reduction. In practice, it is a violation of the basic medical ethic to do no harm.

This guide aims to empower health-care providers to support the principles of giving the best-quality health care for women and girls.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The World Health Organization (WHO) is committed to scaling up the health-sector response to address FGM prevention and care. One aspect is to strengthen the quality of FGM prevention and care services by building the capacity of health-care providers.

Several guidance materials have been produced to target health-care providers. These include FGM content for training curricula, clinical guidelines and a clinical handbook (1,2,4).

This training manual complements previous publications by building person-centred communication skills specifically for FGM prevention.

ABOUT THIS TRAINING

During this training, participants will explore their values towards FGM. They will hear what FGM means to those who practise it, and start to see why members of some communities, including health-care providers, continue to support FGM. It will also equip participants with the person-centred skills to help them communicate in an effective, empathetic and sensitive way with their patients. Using a person-centred approach, participants will learn how to discuss women's beliefs about FGM during a clinical consultation, including antenatal care visits, and how to encourage women to rethink their beliefs about FGM and empower them to abandon the practice. Finally, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the ethical implications of medicalized FGM and learn ways to resist requests to do FGM.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this training is to strengthen the knowledge and skills of health-care providers to be active agents of change for the prevention of FGM, including to challenge their own values towards the practice and its prevention.

The training aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. to build the knowledge of health-care providers on FGM, including the types of FGM, the associated health consequences, and the legal and ethical aspects of the practice;
2. to explore and clarify their own values and attitudes towards FGM and the medicalization of the practice;

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