A State-of-the-Art Synthesis on FGM/C: What Do We Know?

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on behalf of the Evidence to End FGM/C Research Project
A Snapshot of Recent Data (July 2016)

- 29 countries have national data
- 15 countries show no evidence of progress
- 14 countries show some decline
Four countries account for 2 out of 3 women cut

- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Nigeria
- Sudan
What do the data tell us?

- **Where**
  - The data point to “hot spot” geographic areas, including subnational areas

- **At What Age**
  - Most girls now cut < five years of age

- **Why**
  - Marriageability, religious identity, maintenance of family honor, ritual

- **By whom**—medical or traditional
Considerations on the Use and Interpretation of Survey Data on FGM/C (by Shell-Duncan)

- Survey questions may not be comparable across time and regions;
- FGM/C modules and sampling frames may have changed over time, even within a country;
- Can we rely on self-reported data, e.g. recall bias and laws that make the practice illegal?
- Is the cutting status of girls under 5, 5-9 or 10-14 “final”?

What else do we need to know?

- Who are the decisionmakers?
- What is the influence of other factors?
- What role do social norms play?
- Is support shifting, as witnessed by the Readiness to Change Conceptual model?
Readiness to Change—A Conceptual Model

Figure 15. Dimensions of Readiness to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Attitudes towards the practice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinks FGM/C should continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherent of FGM/C</td>
<td>Willing adherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandons FGM/C</td>
<td>Reluctant abandoner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What About Men?

Figure 14. In Most Countries Men Do Not Support Continuation of FGM/C

Adapted from UNICEF 2013, and updated with the most recent FGM/C data.
Opportunities for Abandonment

- No easy answers
- Modernization? Women’s empowerment and mobility?
- Further research necessary
Links to Publications

- Considerations on the Use and Interpretation of Survey Data on FGM/C (Nov. 2016)
- Evidence to End FGM/C: Study Summaries
- Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends Wall Chart: Update 2017
  www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2017/Wallchart-Female-Genital-Mutilation-Declining.aspx
The Evidence to End FGM/C programme consortium generates evidence to inform and influence investments, policies, and programs for ending female genital mutilation/cutting in different contexts.

Evidence to End FGM/C is led by the Population Council in partnership with the Africa Coordination Centre for Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (Kenya); Gender and Reproductive Health & Rights Centre (Sudan); Global Research and Advocacy Group, Senegal (GRAG); MannionDaniels, Ltd.; Population Reference Bureau; University of California, San Diego; and University of Washington. Evidence to End FGM/C is funded by UK aid by the UK Government.