

# **SEXUALITY AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION –THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPACT OF SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION DUE TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

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Background: Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the forceful removal for non-medical reasons, of the female sexual organs, often including the clitoris, the primary organ of sexual pleasure. FGM is done to the girl child as a way to curb her sexuality from a young age. When the child grows up into a woman, the permanent trauma done to her sexual organs results in a range of physical, psychosocial and social problems for the survivor.

Methods: This paper is presented by a survivor of FGM who will share her own personal experiences, as well a review of the current literature on psycho-sexual trauma following FGM.

Results: This paper will discuss these complex psycho-social sexual health consequences of FGM upon the adult survivor of FGM. The complex range of psychological and social trauma has parallels with child sexual assault survivors, and survivors of torture.

Conclusions: The impact of the non-consensual damage to the female genitalia upon survivors is seldom discussed. The psychological trauma is under-addressed by health care providers as many practitioners are unsure of how to approach the sensitive nature of the issue without doing harm. It is important to view the consequences of FGM within a framework which allows the survivor to address the sexual dysfunction which occurred as a result of serious sexual assault.

The paper will provide insights to how to sensitively approach the psychosocial trauma and sexual dysfunction of a survivor of FGM.

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