

# Greater efforts are needed to eliminate female genital mutilation

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The World Health Organization reports that more than 200 million girls and women currently have been subjected to female genital mutilation/cutting worldwide, and three million girls continue to be at risk each year. A new review details how the practice affects individuals physically and psychologically, noting that such traditions that dehumanize and injure are human rights violations.

The review also stresses that alternative rites of passage without cutting is an important strategy for eliminating female genital mutilation/cutting. Such alternative rituals involve education of [girls](#) about family life and women's roles, exchange of gifts, celebration, and a public declaration for community recognition.

"The main reason for the continuation of female genital mutilation/cutting is primarily as a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood. It is important to involve men in the discussion on female genital mutilation/cutting and engage both parents in the cultural change necessary to abandon these practices," said Dr. Vincenzo Puppo, author of the *Clinical Anatomy* review. "Different interventions have been used to eliminate female genital mutilation/cutting: a legal and human rights approach; interventions using a health risk approach and addressing health complications; promotion of girls' education; and educating traditional circumcisers and offering alternative income generation."

**More information:** Vincenzo Puppo, Female genital mutilation and cutting: An anatomical review and alternative rites, *Clinical Anatomy*

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