

Trained health professionals who perform female genital mutilation (FGM) are violating girls' and women's rights to life and health

“It is the mission of the physician to safeguard the health of the people.”

World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 1964

“There are serious risks associated with medicalization of female genital mutilation. Its performance by medical personnel may wrongly legitimize the practice as medically sound or beneficial for girls and women's health. It can also further institutionalize the procedure as medical personnel often hold power, authority, and respect in society.”

Eliminating female genital mutilation. An interagency statement.

“World Health Assembly urges countries to end practice”

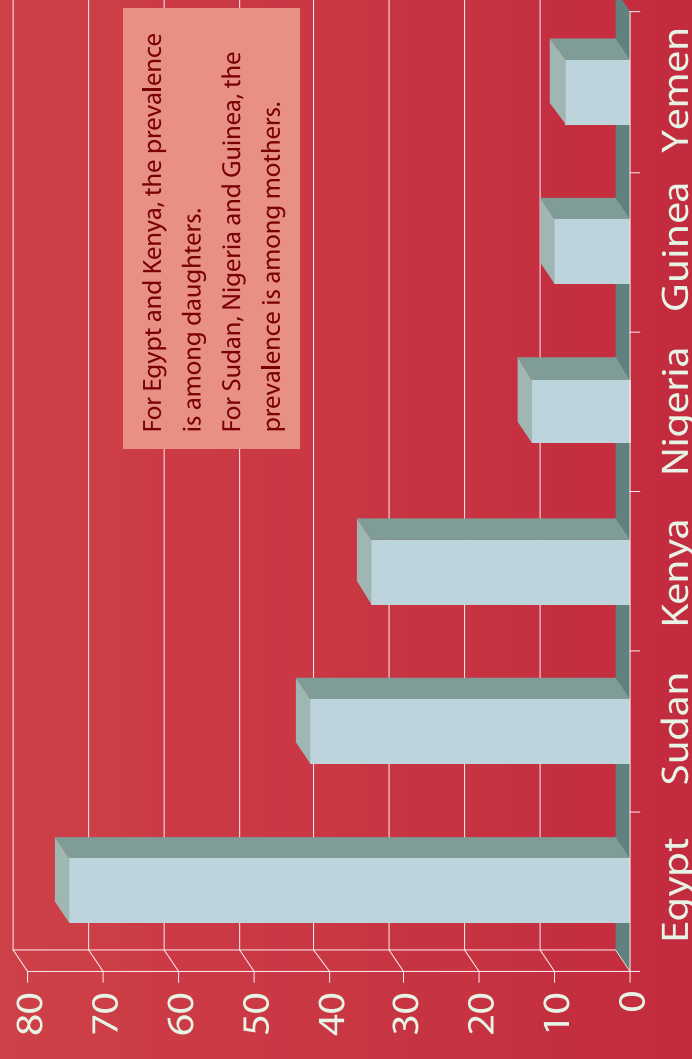
The resolution urges all Member States to, among others, enact and enforce legislation, to protect girls and women from all forms of violence, particularly female genital mutilation, and ensure implementation of laws prohibiting female genital mutilation by any person, including medical professions.

The resolution also urges all Member States to support and enhance community-based efforts, develop and promote guidelines for care of victims.”

61st World Health Assembly, May 2008, Resolution WHA 61.16

An estimated 18% of cases of FGM are being performed by professionally-trained health care providers. This estimate is based on the 18 African countries from which data are available. These same data show that the incidence of medicalization is higher among daughters than among their mothers. This is a disturbing trend that needs to be addressed.

Proportion of FGM performed by health professionals (%)



These professionals are also violating the fundamental medical ethic to 'Do no harm'. In addition to "original FGM", the practice of reinfibulation has been documented as being performed as a routine procedure after childbirth in some countries. Performance of FGM, by health professionals or traditional providers, should be stopped.



World Health Organization



UNDP · UNFPA · WHO · World Bank
Special Programme of Research, Development
and Research Training in Human Reproduction