

**ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE TOWARDS FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING AMONG  
SOMALI IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN KAMPALA-UGANDA**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Introduction**

Female genital cutting (FGC) has lifelong adverse social and health consequences on women, and its prevention will not only enhance the health of children and women, but also promote gender equality. Like many other African countries, Uganda hosts a large proportion of immigrants from FGC-practicing countries such as Somalia. Since Somalia is a country with the highest prevalence of FGC in the world and Uganda has less than 1% of FGC prevalence. However, since the major migration of the Somali community to Uganda began in 1991, this is the first quantitative and qualitative study investigating whether or not Somali immigrants' attitudes toward the practice has changed in favor of its abandonment.

### **Objectives**

To assess attitudes and practice towards FGC among Somali immigrants in Kinseyi Kampala.

### **Methods**

The study was conducted in Kisenyi area of Kampala city in Uganda over a period of three months. Ethical approval was obtained from SOMREC. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative part was a cross-sectional study of 278 randomly selected persons. Participants were interviewed using a structured questionnaire, data was entered into EPI data (3.1) and analysed using STATA (12) software packages. A qualitative approach was employed to explore the health complications of FGC and perspective of all forms of FGC abandonment following the findings from the quantitative data. We conducted 8 focus group discussions comprising of 48 participants selected purposively and content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.

## **Results**

The median age of the participants 25 years for quantitative and 33 years for qualitative part. Majority of the participants had knowledge about health related complications of FGC; Hemorrhage 85%, difficulty urinating 65.5%, Birth 89.2%, Infection 87.8% and possibility of HIV transmission 77%. The majority of participants believed that FGC is religious requirement, pre-requisite for trust-worthy marriage, preserve girl's virginity and dignity. They also believed that it is a good tradition and the pharaonic form is the only harmful form. The study revealed that 97% of Somali women in Kampala are circumcised with 63.7% circumcised in the most severe form. Only 13% support the abolishment of all forms of FGC, majority support the continuation of the Sunna form and were willing to have their daughters undergo FGC.

**Conclusion:** The practice of FGC despite the international campaigns and its illegality in Uganda is very high among the Somali immigrant community and attitude towards FGC practice remained un-changed even after migration to a country where FGC is rare. The government together with CSO needs to intensify interventions that use religious approach to discourage FGC.