Immediate health consequences of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

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Record Status
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Citation

Authors' conclusions
We included 56 observational studies that documented immediate complications. There were 14 studies in which two or more groups of girls and women with different types of FGM/C were compared with regards to the occurrence of one or more acute complications. There are three main findings: •The most common immediate FGM/C complications were: pain, excessive bleeding, swelling, problems with wound healing, urine retention. •The girls and women undergoing FGM/C often suffered more than one immediate complication. •There were few differences in risk of immediate complications among different types of FGM/C, but there might be a greater risk of immediate complications for women with FGM/C type III (infibulation) compared to types I-II. There was evidence of under-reporting of complications. However, the findings show that the FGM/C procedure unequivocally causes immediate, and typically several, health complications during the FGM/C procedure and the short-term period. Each of the most common complications occurred in more than one of every ten girls and women who undergo FGM/C. The participants in these studies had FGM/C types I through IV, thus immediate complications such as bleeding and swelling occur in setting with all forms of FGM/C. Even GM/C type I and type IV 'nick', the forms of FGM/C with least anatomical extent, presented immediate complications. The results document that multiple immediate and quite serious complications can result from FGM/C. These results should be viewed in light of long-term complications, such as obstetric and gynecological problems, and protection of human rights.

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