Talking about FGM

Doctors and other healthcare professionals may ask questions to provide support and protection

- Have you been cut down there?
- Were you circumcised?
- Have you been closed?

FGM in pregnancy

It is important that pregnant women who have undergone FGM tell their midwife or doctor about this so that they can:

- Check if it will be safe to deliver the baby
- Arrange for some women to have a procedure mid-way through pregnancy to make it safe to deliver the baby

Summary

- FGM has no health benefits
- FGM may cause lifelong health problems
- FGM is violence against women and children
- FGM is against the law

Support

UCLH FGM Clinic uclh.nhs.uk | 020 3447 9411
Clinician and self-referral to fgmsupport@uclh.nhs.uk with further resources available online.

FORWARD www.forwarduk.org.uk | 020 8000 4000
Leading UK charity focused on safeguarding women’s rights and promoting research.

NSPCC FGM Helpline www.nspcc.org.uk | 0800 028 3550
The UK’s leading children’s charity dedicated to end child abuse in all its forms.

UNDERSTANDING FGM

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) involves cutting or injuring the female genital organs for non-medical reasons

The cultural practice dates back to ancient times and is known by a number of different names:

- Ibi
- Tahoor
- Khitan
- Gudnii
- Sunna
- Halalays
- Absum
- Kutairi
- Bondo
- Cutting
- Circumcision
- Being closed

Countries where FGM is common

FGM is also practised in some communities in Asia, for example, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines

Source: UNICEF, 2013

FGM in the UK

There are likely to be over 130,000 women in the UK who have undergone FGM

It has been estimated that over 20,000 girls in the UK are at risk of FGM each year

Viva la Vulva, UCL © 2015 | fgm@vivalavulva.org
When is FGM performed?

- At Birth
- Infancy
- Childhood
- Teenagers
- Before or at marriage

Potential harmful effects

Immediate effects:
- Major bleeding
- Difficulty passing urine
- Death
- Life-threatening infections

Life-long effects:
- Problems with periods
- Problems with sex
- Urinary problems
- Psychological problems
- Pain and infection
- Scarring and cysts
- Pregnancy complications
- Infertility

FGM violates human rights

- The right to be free from gender discrimination
- The right to life and physical integrity
- The right to health
- The rights of the child

FGM is a criminal offence

- FGM is illegal and UK residents may be fined or go to prison for up to 14 years if they arrange for FGM to be performed on any girl or woman

Types of FGM

No FGM
- A girl/woman's genital area

Type 1
- Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or hood of the clitoris

Type 2
- Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or hood of the clitoris with total or partial removal of the inner lips

Type 3
- External genitals removed with or without removal of the clitoris, and the vaginal opening stitched closed (also known as infibulation)

Type 4
- All other harmful procedures, including pricking, cutting or burning the clitoris (1), cutting or scarring the vaginal opening (2), or stretching the labia (3)