**Title**

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Australian Medical Students’ Knowledge & Awareness

**Author and Affiliations**

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**Background**

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is a covert problem in Australia with serious, long-lasting impacts. An estimated 200 million girls and women have undergone the procedure with 2-3 million girls globally affected1. Moreover, recommendations from the Royal College of General Practitioners (UK) advocates that education on FGM/C should be included in medical school curricula, as well as speciality training including general practice2.

**Aims**

This study assesses the knowledge and awareness of FGM/C among final year Victorian medical students.

**Method**

We performed a cross-sectional, piloted-survey to assess students’ awareness, knowledge, clinical experience and educational training with regards to FGM/C.

**Results**

84 students participated in the study, with 76 complete responses (90.48%). While all students reported hearing about FGM/C, only four acknowledged receipt of formal education and 17 (22.37%) listed five complications of FGM/C. The majority associated FGM/C with accepted cultural (90.79%) and religious requirements (73.68%) and agreed that FGM/C is a violation of human rights (84.74%) requiring mandatory notification (88.12%). Most had never asked (93.42%) nor looked for it on examination (85.53%). Nearly all agreed that students and junior doctors should be aware of FGM/C (96.05%) with the majority indicating that FGM/C should be included in medical school curricula (84.21%).

**Conclusion**

The limited understanding of FGM/C among future Victorian clinicians heralds the need for (i) improvements in medical curricula that are tailored to our evolving societal demographic (ii) further assessment of the understanding of FGM/C among primary care practitioners.

**References**

1. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A global Concern [Internet]. New York: UNICEF Data & Analytics Section; 2016. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGMC\_2016\_brochure\_final\_UNICEF\_SPREAD.pdf
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