

Clitoridectomies vs. Spiritual Mutilation

In Somalia 99.2% of Women Experience Clitoridectomies. American Comparison: In America, women do not generally experience clitoridectomy or female genital mutilation as a cultural practice. However, women still endure enormous amounts of abuse, suppression through religious authority, cheating, revenge pornography, child and animal abuse, physical violence, psychological abuse, humiliation, degradation, and other very painful experiences that can interfere with healthy relationships, families, love, trust, and intimacy.

We may not always be physically mutilated, but women can experience mental and spiritual mutilation that takes away autonomy, joy, safety, love, and the ability to experience relationships as pleasurable and meaningful. It can feel as though the pleasure, freedom, and beauty that should belong to women are taken from them and placed under male control.

Women already endure the physical realities of being female. Menstruation can be painful. Pregnancy and childbirth can be painful and dangerous. Chemicals, medications, pesticides, and other environmental exposures can affect reproductive health. Women can also experience physical injury and trauma through abuse and sexual violence.

Revenge pornography, for example, can become a form of ongoing humiliation and psychological torture. Physical abuse can leave lasting injuries. Cruelty toward animals can be used to frighten and control women. Religious or social authority can be used to suppress women and dictate what they are allowed to do with their own bodies and lives.

Much of this suffering is preventable. Women should be cared for rather than cruelly beaten, exploited, humiliated, controlled, or tortured. These experiences reveal a troubling reality about the ways women can be treated by men and by societies that permit or excuse this treatment. Human slavery and oppression have not disappeared simply because society has changed the language and ignored the issues. Control can take many forms, including control over a woman's body, sexuality, reproduction, relationships, finances, beliefs, safety, and dignity.

Women deserve lives where love does not require suffering or submission to cruelty, and where being female does not mean accepting pain as an inevitable experience. A thriving society requires a far less painful life for women and girls. Women deserve safety, autonomy, love, pleasure, dignity, healthy families, and the freedom to live without violence, mutilation or control.

~Cowdrey