

Female Genital Mutilation

DEBORAH UDAKIS CONSULTANCY LTD

FGM

- ▶ **Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.**
- ▶ **The practice is illegal in the UK.**



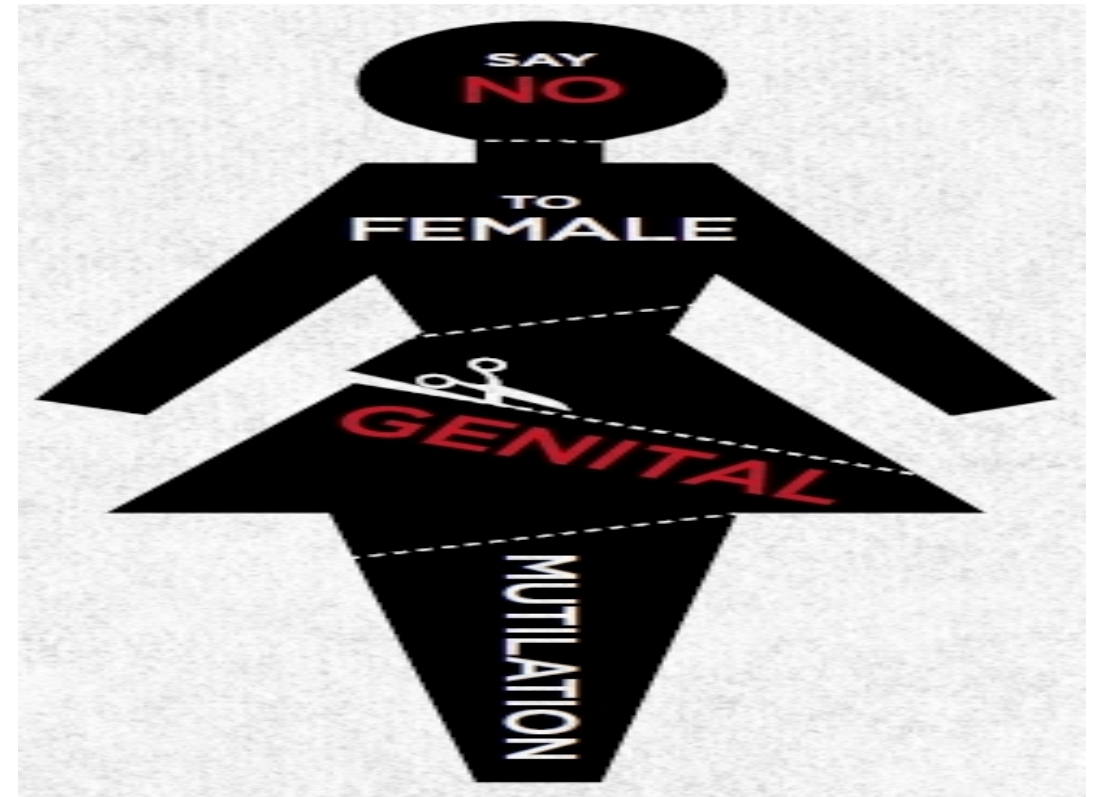
Who is at risk?

- ▶ **over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the UK each year**
- ▶ **Worldwide 140 million survivors of FGM**
- ▶ **the true extent is unknown, due to the "hidden" nature of the crime.**

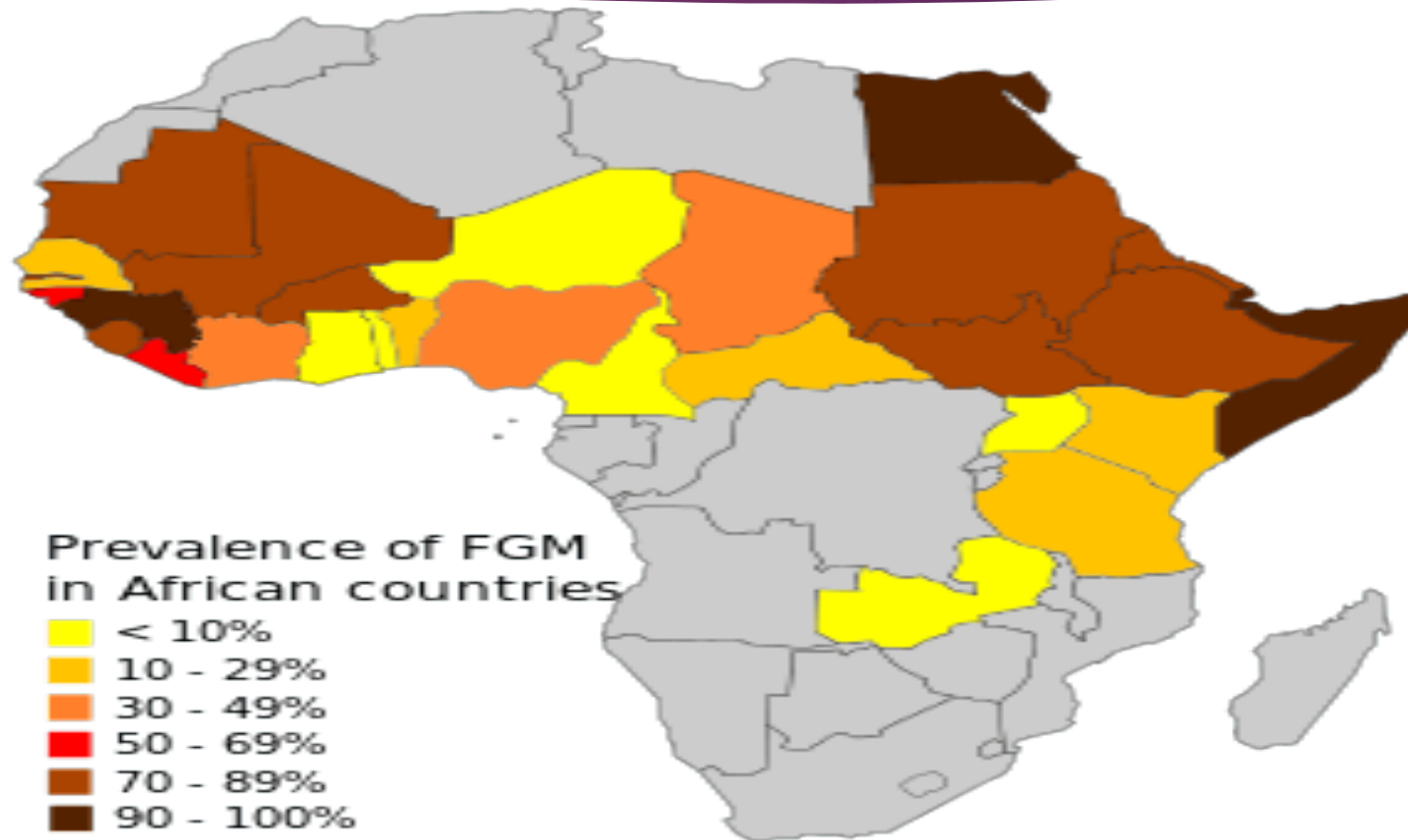


'Cutting Season'

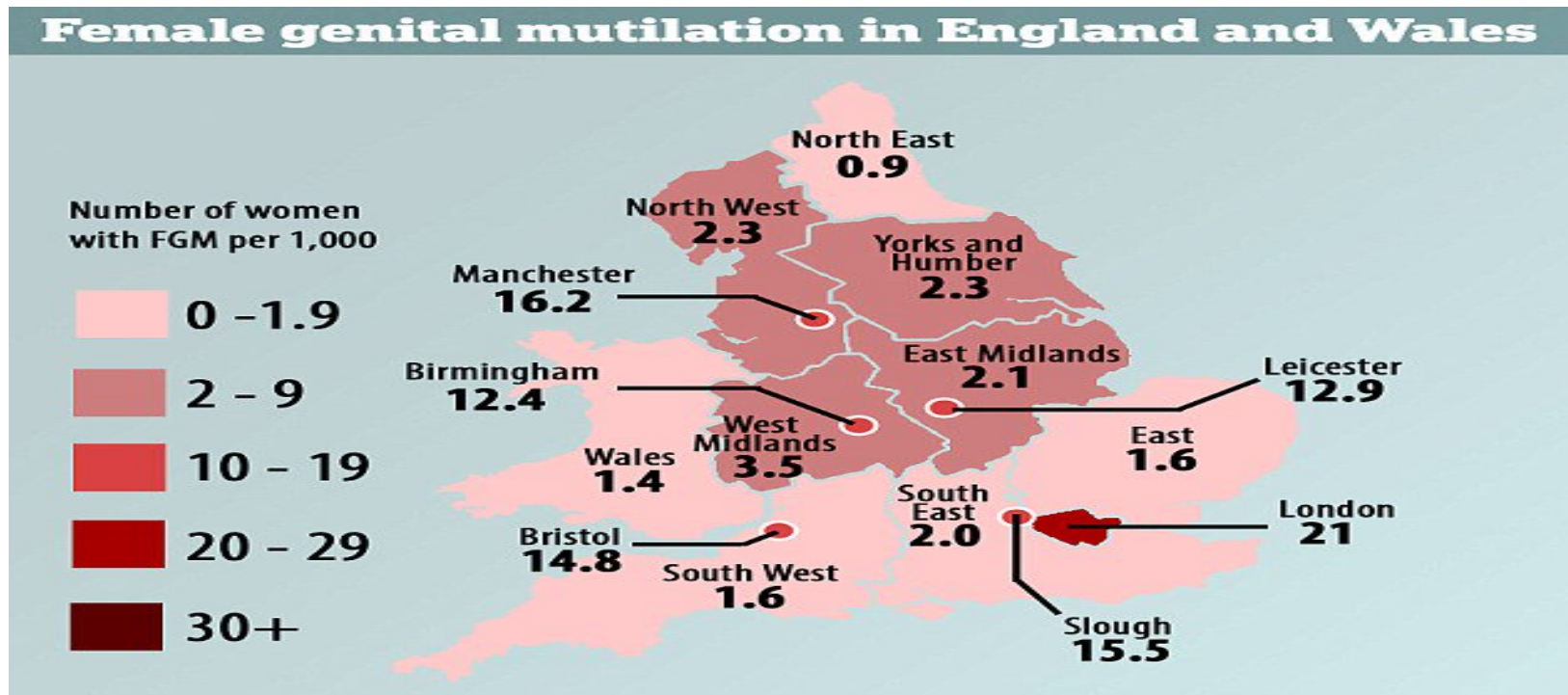
- ▶ **Cutting Season = school holidays**
- ▶ **The girls may be taken to their countries of origin so that FGM can be carried out during the summer holidays, allowing them time to "heal" before they return to school. There are also worries that some girls may have FGM performed in the UK.**



FGM prevalence in African Countries



FGM in UK



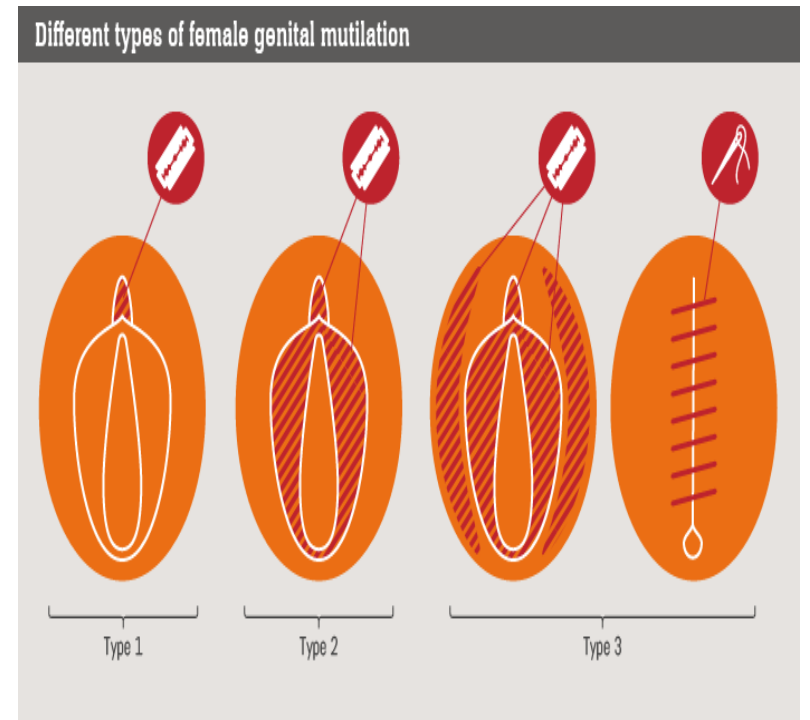
FGM

- ▶ **is not attached to any one culture but it operates within communities in all parts of the world**
- ▶ **is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts**
- ▶ **is traditionally carried out by a woman with no medical training. Anaesthetics and antiseptic treatments are not generally used, and the practice is usually carried out using knives, scissors, scalpels, pieces of glass or razor blades.**
- ▶ **Girls may have to be forcibly restrained.**



Types of FGM

- ▶ **Type 1 – clitoridectomy** – removing part or all of the clitoris.
- ▶ **Type 2 – excision** – removing part or all of the clitoris and the inner labia (lips that surround the vagina), with or without removal of the labia majora (larger outer lips).
- ▶ **Type 3 – infibulation** – narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a seal, formed by cutting and repositioning the labia.
- ▶ **Other harmful procedures** to the female genitals, which include pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping and burning the area.



Fact

- ▶ **There are no health benefits to FGM.**
- ▶ **Removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue interferes with the natural functions of girls' and women's bodies.**



Immediate effects of FGM

- ▶ severe pain
- ▶ shock
- ▶ bleeding
- ▶ wound infections, including tetanus and gangrene, as well as blood-borne viruses such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C
- ▶ inability to urinate
- ▶ injury to vulval tissues surrounding the entrance to the vagina
- ▶ damage to other organs nearby, such as the urethra (where urine passes) and the bowel
- ▶ FGM can sometimes cause death.

60,000 girls
under the age of **15**
are at the risk of
FGM in the UK

Long-term consequences

- ▶ **chronic vaginal and pelvic infections**
- ▶ **abnormal periods**
- ▶ **difficulty passing urine, and persistent urine infections**
- ▶ **kidney impairment and possible kidney failure**
- ▶ **damage to the reproductive system, including infertility**
- ▶ **cysts and the formation of scar tissue**



Long-term consequences

- ▶ **complications in pregnancy and newborn deaths**
- ▶ **pain during sex and lack of pleasurable sensation**
- ▶ **psychological damage, including low libido, depression and anxiety (see below)**
- ▶ **flashbacks during pregnancy and childbirth**
- ▶ **the need for later surgery to open the lower vagina for sexual intercourse and childbirth**



Psychological and mental health problems

- ▶ **Case histories and personal accounts taken from women indicate that FGM is an extremely traumatic experience for girls and women, which stays with them for the rest of their lives.**
- ▶ **Young women receiving psychological counselling in the UK report feelings of betrayal by parents, as well as regret and anger.**

"FGM cast a shadow over all my life choices and it was only after I began therapy that I could understand this. FGM cannot be undone but survivors can heal"

Leyla Hussein



The legal situation


- ▶ **FGM is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to arrange for a child to be taken abroad for FGM. If caught, offenders face a large fine and a prison sentence of up to 14 years.**



Department
of Health

'Care, Protect, Prevent'

#EndFGM



NHS
England

FGM Mandatory reporting
duty – What you need to do

Strengthening Safeguarding – from 31 October 2015

FGM is child abuse

- ▶ **A mandatory reporting duty for FGM requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police. The FGM duty came into force on 31 October 2015.**



Your responsibility

- ▶ If you are worried about someone who is at risk of FGM or has had FGM, you must share this information with social care or the police. It is then their responsibility to investigate and protect any girls or women involved.

FGCM

It's **MUTILATION**

Not 'Cutting'

Reporting concerns



Worried about FGM?

Call the NSPCC Helpline, if you are worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM.

It's free, anonymous and 24 hours.

0800 028 3550

or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Contact me at Deborah Udakis Consultancy Ltd



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