

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have a question, compliment, comment or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3081. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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FGM Data Submission

Patient Information Leaflet

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Collecting and using information from patients with FGM

Information about FGM is being collected by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). To find out more about what information the HSCIC are collecting, why, and how they will use it, please go to <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/fgm>.

We will not submit your data to the HSCIC without your explicit informed consent.

What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed, but there is no medical reason for this. It can seriously harm women and girls' health in the long term. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure. Women who have had FGM are also likely to experience difficulty in childbirth.

FGM is usually carried out on girls between the ages of 5 and 10. It can be known as female circumcision, cutting or by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan among other names.

FGM causes serious harm

FGM causes serious harm to girls and women, including:

- constant pain
- repeated infections which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems passing urine or incontinence
- depression, flashbacks, self-harm
- labour/childbirth problems which can lead to death

FGM is illegal

FGM is illegal and must never be carried out either in the UK or abroad. It is also illegal to help someone to carry out FGM in any way.

Anyone found guilty faces up to 14 years in prison and/or may be fined (made to pay a financial penalty).

Types of FGM

Type 1 – removing some or all of the clitoris

Type 2 – removing some or all of both the clitoris and the small labia (the "lips" that surround the vagina).

Type 3 – removing some or all of the female genitalia, including the clitoris. Sewing the edges together to leave a small hole.

Type 4 – all other types of harm, including cutting, burning, scraping, pricking and stretching the female genitals.

Why does FGM happen?

It is usually a girl's parents or extended family who arrange for her to have FGM. Reasons for doing it include:

- custom
- religion
- preserving tradition
- preserving virginity
- cleanliness
- protecting family honour
- social acceptance, especially in relation to marriage

These reasons for FGM are based on misunderstanding or lack of awareness.

Some believe FGM is required as part of their religion, for example Type 1 FGM is sometimes mistakenly called sunna. But there are no religious texts which support FGM or say it should be done.