

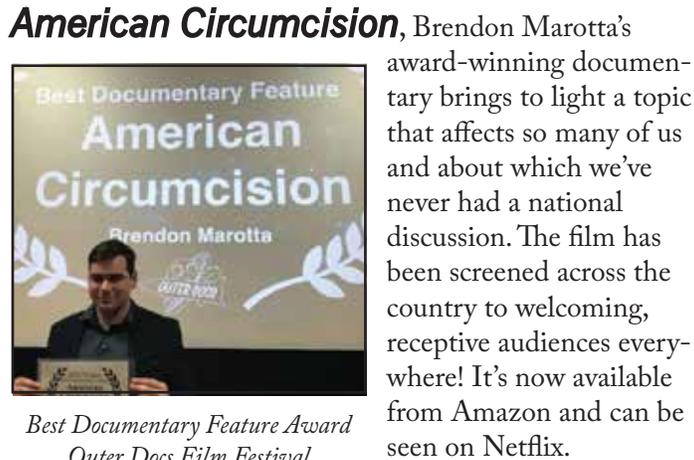


GA America Annual Newsletter

2019

ISSN 2476-0161

Volume 3



Best Documentary Feature Award
Outer Docs Film Festival

American Circumcision, Brendon Marotta's award-winning documentary brings to light a topic that affects so many of us and about which we've never had a national discussion. The film has been screened across the country to welcoming, receptive audiences everywhere! It's now available from Amazon and can be seen on Netflix.

AAP Refused to Accept Ad for American Circumcision

The AAP rejected an info card submitted by Brendon Marotta for inclusion in one attendee's 2018 AAP National Convention bag. The cost is \$5,500 for one day and \$10,000 for both days, an amount Brendon was willing to pay. However, he received a note that read, "The AAP has declined your ad." No reason given.

AAP Acknowledges Spanking Harms Children's Brains

At its 2019 National Convention in Orlando, Florida, the AAP announced its updated policy statement on corporal punishment. The use of spanking as a disciplinary tool increases aggression in young children in the long run and is ineffective in teaching a child responsibility and self-control. Evidence suggests that it may cause harm by affecting normal brain development. Available evidence demonstrates circumcision causes the same, if not greater, harm to the developing brain. Exposure to abuse causes the body's natural fight-or-flight response to stay switched on. We've been moving from asking "What's wrong with you?" to asking, "What happened to you that caused your pain?" And, now we also should be asking, "Who is promoting the unnecessary pain and trauma of circumcising babies?"

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the most common cause of infant death. The *allostatic load hypothesis* suggests SIDS is the result of cumulative painful, stressful, or traumatic exposures that tax a newborn's regulatory systems. Relationships between SIDS and two common stressors – male neonatal circumcision and prematurity – were explored. (See *Sudden Infant Death Syndrome*, page 7.)

Judge Dismisses FGM Law as Unconstitutional

We've known the FGM law is unconstitutional because it lacks gender equality that is required by the 14th Amendment, but, that's not why the judge in the Detroit FGM lawsuit took issue with it. The reason for his decision is that genital cutting is physical assault, and assault and battery are already illegal in every state. Brian Earp explained, "Because Congress isn't allowed to regulate 'local criminal activity' under the Constitution – unless it substantially affects interstate commerce – in passing the 1996 law, it overstepped its bounds." [See 'Unconstitutional' US Anti-FGM Law, page 4.] The FGM law had never been challenged in court, so the attorneys in the Detroit case didn't know *not* to use it. Lawyers can use battery (the cut) and false imprisonment (tethering or holding the child down) as causes of action when bringing non-therapeutic genital cutting of minor children lawsuits before the court.

First FGM Conviction in UK

A woman whose 3-year-old daughter was subjected to FGM in 2017 is the first person in the UK to be convicted for the practice. The mother had her daughter cut at their London home, but called 999 because the girl was bleeding heavily. Police were alerted by hospital staff who did not believe the woman's claim that the girl had fallen off a kitchen worktop onto a cupboard door. The 37-year-old Ugandan mother maintained her story throughout the trial but was convicted. She wept as the verdict was read. She faces up to 14 years in prison. The 43-year-old Ghanaian father was cleared of charges. FGM has been illegal in the UK since 1985. The cutter remains at large. *Independent*. 2/1/19.



Brendon Marotta's award-winning documentary *American Circumcision* was shown at the 15th International Symposium on Genital Autonomy and Children's Rights last May. Since then, the feature-length film has been shown in theaters across the country, made available for purchase on Amazon and other outlets,

and now is available on Netflix. I am amazed by the number of emails I've received in response to the film (see Letters to the Editor section below), and I am especially encouraged by the young people who express their relief at seeing the film prior to having children. Their babies will be protected. *American Circumcision* is an effective educational tool.

However, in an attempt to inform pediatricians about *American Circumcision*, Brendon submitted an information card for inclusion in the 2018 American Academy of Pediatrics National Convention Program packets. The AAP refused to accept his cards. Why doesn't the AAP – the medical group that forms a Task Force every few years to prepare circumcision policy statements – want its members to know about this educational documentary? Is it because they're the stakeholders, the people with a vested interest in the custom – be it personal, cultural, religious, or financial? How can we have a national discussion about the issue when the perpetrators refuse to come to the table?

At the second symposium in San Francisco in 1991, Lisa Braver Moss addressed the issue of circumcision head on. She recognized the difficult challenge she faced by doing so, and it was nearly 20 years later that her book, *The Measure of His Grief: a novel* (First Notim Press, 2010), about a man dealing with the issue of circumcision, was published. Five years later, another book, co-authored with Rebecca Wald, *Celebrating Brit Shalom*, (Notim Press, Oakland, California, 2015) was published. Lisa had developed another approach. Then, in her 2018 symposium talk, Lisa mentioned her conversation with her rabbi, in which she asked, "Since there are Jewish families who are having a *brit shalom* instead of a circumcision for their babies, will we be a synagogue of inclusion or exclusion? Will we accept these families into our synagogue or will they be 'cut off from their people'?" Her rabbi said that theirs is a *synagogue of inclusion*. Lisa didn't confront her rabbi with the *issue* of circumcision, she just asked what would be done about those Jewish families who choose to not circumcise their sons. What a brilliant approach!

I am in awe of all the brilliant approaches being taken now, by Brendon, Lisa, Intact America and crew, who are reaching tens of thousands of people every week on social media with current information; Brother K and his Bloodstained Men & Friends, who are taking the issue to the streets in cities across the country; Anthony Losquadro's *Intaction* truck and his team of educators, who are speaking to people in New York City and the surrounding area; Bay Area Intactivists, who are hosting booths, demon-

strating, and joining in the San Francisco and Oakland Pride Parades; Jen Williams' *Your Whole Baby*, which provides folks with educational tools to work locally; Dr. Mark Reiss' *Brit Shalom Celebrants* at <http://www.britshalom.info/list.html>; and other organizations such as Doctors Opposing Circumcision, Attorneys for the Rights of the Child, NORM, and too many others nationally and internationally to mention here. And, there are all the individuals who make a difference by educating others through conversations, letters, articles, speaking, demonstrating, and so much more. Whether stakeholders are helping or not, we *are* reaching the people and they are hearing our message.

We are seeing change happen every day. It is the work of each and every one of us that is getting us closer and closer to critical mass/the tipping point/the hundredth monkey. It doesn't matter what we call it. As Rio Cruz said so many years ago, "One day, circumcision will collapse under its own dead weight." And, doesn't that just put a smile on your face?

With gratitude,

In Memoriam

Doctor Dominique Arnaud, who produced the only documentary in France against religious circumcision, *Silence, on coupe!*, died on March 25. The trailer for his documentary can be viewed at: http://youtu.be/XOBqNbvR9_0/.

Iris Fudge, a retired nurse who was an active member of NORM-UK and Men Do Complain to help bring an end to genital cutting of infants and children, has recently passed. See James Loewen's interview with Iris: <https://www.mendocomplain.com/iris-fudge-vid/>.



Paul Mason, an Australian human rights attorney, past Tasmanian Commissioner for Children, and founder of the Australasian Institute for Genital Autonomy died suddenly and unexpectedly from lung cancer in August with his wife Lyn and son Orlando in his arms. Paul

asked to be cremated in his flower suit, which he wore so well! See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjwrBkLA4gM>.

"I was born with Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome with hypospadias [urinary opening on underside of the penis]. I was operated on when I was eight months old to make me look 'normal.' This was done without my informed consent and resulted in ten failed corrective surgeries to repair the damage. My penis was so clogged with scar tissue, they had to amputate. When I was ten, I was held down on the operating table kicking and screaming. Also, they stripped me naked and took pictures of me. This has left me with PTSD depression and now I give lectures and do advocacy for intersex rights. You may use my story."

Andrea Boisseau, CPF
New England Director OII
oii-usa.org

"I am getting hopeful Africans will see what's happening. WHO, USAID, and others are promoting what they call 90-90-90: 90% of people who are infected know it, 90% who know take antiretrovirals, and 90% of those have viral suppression. I'm hoping people who test positive but know they had no sex risks – there will be A LOT OF THEM! – will figure out they're getting it from healthcare. Then they can stop their epidemic – and, of course, they can also see that circumcision is useless, so can stop that nonsense!"

David Gisselquist, PhD



"We have launched *Alliance of World Intact* to empower African communities in rejecting false and fake government policy of circumcising all newborn baby boys allegedly to end HIV in Uganda. AIDS is killing thousands of

circumcised people every day in Uganda, Kenya, and other parts of Africa. We promote use of condoms *not* circumcision in HIV prevention. We demand banning mass child circumcision, and we need your financial support. We need T-shirts, bags, bicycles, reading materials, condoms, and a phone to sustain our activities. Marilyn Milos has been my mentor for many years. Thank you, too, for supporting this needed work."

Prince Hillary Sebe Maloba

[Earmarked donations for this project can be made to GA-America.]

Dear Ms Milos,
I saw *American Circumcision* last night and I was very moved by what I saw. As a man who was circumcised at birth, I was particularly horrified when someone in the movie described circumcised men as not realizing the degree to which they have lost sensitivity. They don't know how they were harmed because they don't know any different. This is me exactly. I am 59 years old and I am very aware of the desensitization that has occurred but it took me years to discover it.

In this culture you can't talk about this problem. Anything penis-related is a punch line, a prompt for nervous laughter. When I have spoken up about this to other health professionals I was bullied by ridicule. The inevitable comment designed to shut down the conversation is something like, "Well, if you didn't jack off so damn much!", followed by laughter. These are health professionals doing this! They are truly just as ignorant as the public, and they display a willingness to forgo an analysis of the arguments and the evidence so that we can talk about something else.

The reason I am writing to you, Ms Milos, is to thank you. I'm sure your expertise on this issue has also been ridiculed or been the butt of jokes, but what you are doing is so very important. Men need an advocate like you, and you have not been cowed and you have not given up. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for speaking up for us. We are lucky to have you as our voice.

Sincerely,
G.G.,
Houston, Texas

Dear Marilyn,

I just wanted to contact you following watching the *American Circumcision* documentary on Netflix. I am a gynaecological specialist nurse, lucky to have been trained in one of the most prominent hospitals in the UK. Of course, being a female health nurse, the emphasis has always been on the horror of FGM. Despite me raising the issue of male circumcisions and the parallel human rights issues at each seminar I have attended, it is normalised and, in the UK, seen as a predominantly religious issue. I would like to thank you for reminding me, that as a nurse and a member of society, I have a voice. Watching the way you have kept on using yours despite the opposition you have faced (much of which is patronising and dismissive of you as a woman) has reiterated to me the courage I need to display in my own convictions. For this alone, I thank you.

Regards,
Angharad Coveney,
Sevenoaks, Kent, England

Thank you. I just watched *American Circumcision* and I have two boys, one is 11 years, the other 7 months. I have been routinely shamed on the fact I did not choose to circumcise my boys when other moms have discussed the topic. I had no information on why I chose not to, but my gut told me it would be cruel. I thank you for your time and the education I received. I feel more educated about the topic and way more confident in my and my husband's decision not to do this unethical procedure. Thank you for your passion and time dedicated to this topic. I feel a little lighter and more relaxed due to your commitment to all of our sons.

Jessica Rhodes,
Ontario Canada

Bodily Integrity Rights

“In this chapter, I define an infringement of bodily integrity (BI) as any breaking of the skin or other alteration to a person’s physical form. A violation of a person’s right to BI is any infringement of their BI that wrongs them. A person is wronged by an infringement of their BI if they did not consent to it. If they are incapable of consenting because they are temporarily impaired – or pre-autonomous in the case of children – the infringement should be delayed until the impairment resolved or the child becomes autonomous. If the infringement cannot be delayed without undermining the child’s own best interests, it is permissible if it is what the child would consent to if it were autonomous. The less certain it is what the child would autonomously consent to, the more likely it is the infringement is a violation of their right to BI. The appropriate degree of certainty for proceeding with a BI infringement, I argue, should be at or near the ‘medically necessary’ threshold.” Earp, B.D (in press). *The Child’s Right to bodily integrity*. In D. Edmonds (Ed., *Ethics and the Contemporary World*. Abingdon, UK and New York, USA: Routledge.

Examining Nontherapeutic Circumcision

Do male minors have a moral right not to be circumcised without a medical indication? This question has become urgent in moral, political, and legal debate over the last several decades....This Article argues that male minors have a moral anticipatory right-in-trust not to be circumcised without a medical indication. Based on norms of autonomy and bodily integrity, this Article’s treatment of children’s rights, parental rights, religious freedom, and tolerance offers arguments accessible to readers of many ethical, political, and intellectual persuasions. Three direct arguments rest on (1) the loss of nonrenewable functional tissue, (2) genital salience, and (3) limits on a parental right to permanently modify their sons’ bodies. This Article also compares circumcision to a rare form of female genital cutting; the comparison contains the seed of an argument sounding in (4) gender equality. Stephen R. Munzer, JD, *Examining Nontherapeutic Circumcision*, *Health Matrix* 28, Issue 1, 2018.

‘Unconstitutional’ US Anti-FGM Law

“Advocates of children’s rights need to band together – across the sex and gender divide – and make clear that the central moral issue here is the violation of a child’s bodily integrity without consent, and the exposure of that child’s healthy ‘private parts’ to surgical risk without an urgent medical need. Whatever their sex or gender, it is their body so it should be their choice.” ‘Unconstitutional’ US

anti-FGM law exposes hypocrisy in child protection. Brian D. Earp. *The Conversation*. January 11, 2019.

<https://theconversation.com/unconstitutional-us-anti-fgm-law-exposes-hypocrisy-in-child-protection-109305?fbclid=IwAR0Ty-LpYrV3c5-6gslJq7hJpyR5W8sdmQ5Xpq7TYfoqBxpVJ1jB-aYmaG4Q>

Canada – A Regina doctor was officially reprimanded and ordered to pay more than \$10,000 after the circumcision of a baby boy went wrong. Dr. Zimran Chowdhary was found guilty of unprofessional or improper conduct for not dealing appropriately with complications of circumcision. *The Canadian Press*. 3/21/18.

California – California’s legislature passed a resolution on August 28, 2018, that supports the autonomy of intersex people and their right to decide about cosmetic surgical alteration. This is the first successful move by a state legislature in the USA to call on the medical community to establish standards of care for intersex children that take into account their human rights. The resolution urges health professionals to foster the well-being of children born with variations of sex characteristics, and the adults they will become, with individualized, multidisciplinary care that respects patients’ rights to participate in decisions, defers medical or surgical intervention, as warranted, until the child is able to participate in decision making, and promotes patient and family well-being. www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/28/california-resolution-affirms-intersex-rights.

Steven Svoboda, Director, Attorneys for the Rights of the Child, following the passing of Paul Mason, led the preparation and submission of the “third party intervention” by the *International NGO Council on Genital Autonomy* (INGOCGA) to the United Nations’ Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). A “third party intervention” is a relatively novel procedure, roughly akin to a “friend of the court” brief in US law, in which the CRC invited INGOCGA, as a non-government organization, to advise it regarding the anatomical, medical, human rights, legal, and ethical implications of male circumcision. The CRC asked INGOCGA to submit the intervention to help it evaluate a 2016 Finnish Supreme Court circumcision prosecution that found the doctor and father liable for a circumcision of a four-month-old boy. Other prominent members of the INGOCGA team include Antony Lempert of the UK’s Secular Medical Forum, Kira Antinuk of Canada’s Children’s Health & Human Rights Partnership, and James Chegwidan, Barrister, Old Square Chambers, London.

Georgia – A Clayton County jury awarded a 4-year-old boy \$31 million for a botched circumcision, which occurred in 2013 at Life Cycle Pediatrics in Riverdale, that severed part of the boy's penis, causing physical pain from chronic scabbing and a likely lifetime of mental anguish because of the resulting deformity. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 9/21/18.

“The parents of an intact male, whose foreskin allegedly was forcibly retracted prior to the the insertion of a urinary catheter, have sued a nurse, a nursing supervisor, and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Inc. They charge alleged battery, nursing malpractice, the intentional infliction of emotional distress, and other torts, according to Atlanta attorney, David J. Llewellyn.” Atlanta (PRWEB). 1/12/18.

Illinois – A Chicago mother is suing Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, Northwestern Medicine, and Dr. Marc Feldstein for allegedly taking insufficient measures to prevent injuries. Kate O'Laughlin, on behalf of her son, filed a complaint on 3/22 in Cook County Circuit Court, alleging her son sustained physical injuries as a result of an improperly performed circumcision. Cook County Circuit Court case number 2018L002984. 4/4/18.

Jordan – A Jordanian man is suing his father for having him circumcised. His lawsuit claims his father used a warlock to circumcise him according to Jewish traditions one week after he was born, which led to the disfigurement of his penis. “My father had me circumcised for no legitimate religious or health reasons and without consulting with a doctor first,” the distressed man, a lawyer, said. His father's act constitutes an offence that has subjected his penis to bleeding, pain, and disfigurement, and deprived him of benefitting from an important part of his body.

“There was neither a legal nor religious valid justification for having me circumcised. This is a hostile crime that every child in this society is subjected to; an inhumane and cruel act.” The lawyer was adamant that removing that crucial part from his penis caused him not only physical but psychological problems. He is demanding financial compensation from his father in the first case of its kind in the Kingdom. <http://en.royanews.tv/news/13516/2018-02-16>.

Missouri – A Springfield man who started his own religious ministry was charged with illegally circumcising two teenagers. Curtis Abbott, 47, pleaded not guilty to two counts of child endangerment and one count of unauthorized practice of medicine or surgery. *Springfield News-Leader*, 10/12/18.

Long Island, NY – A mother claims her newborn son's penis was partially amputated and then thrown away during

a circumcision gone terribly wrong. Sandra Albano's son was circumcised on 9/21 by Dr. Aaron Davidson at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset. According to court papers, the doctor allegedly, “negligently amputated a significant portion of the penile glans extending into the urethra and then acted with carelessness and recklessness by throwing the amputated tissue into the hazard bin thus preventing it from being surgically reattached to the infant's penis.” Davidson was using a Mogen-style clamp, known for causing damage to the glans. Evidently, this was not Davidson's first botched circumcision. <https://ny-post.com/2018/11/02/mom-claims-doctor-botched-new-born-sons-circumcision>.

New York, NY – Mayor Bill de Blasio signed historic legislation, adding a third “X” gender category to birth certificates issued by the City of New York. The law went into effect on 1/1/19.

Uganda – A 14-year-old boy sued the Infections Diseases Institute (IDI) for allegedly circumcising him without his parents' consent. Bruno Angel says the act caused him permanent injuries and pain. In his May lawsuit, Angel claims the IDI staff forcibly circumcised him while he was a student at Kalangaia Primary School. “They said servants of the defendant (health facility) at their own initiative assumed a duty of circumcising the plaintiff without consent and knowledge of his parents...The plaintiff informed said servants that his parents were not in support of their action but [was told] that they were executing government orders to circumcise the male children,” the court documents said. The IDI staff asked him not to mention the circumcision to his parents, luring him with juice and biscuits. Angel also claims the IDI did not treat him despite several requests. “The plaintiff's parents came to know about the said un-consented circumcision when he could no longer move due to severe bleeding, swelling of testicles and penis, too much pain and pus flowing out of his penis,” the court documents said.

www.minor.co.ug/News/National/Teenager-sues-II-circumcision-gone-wrong-688334-4588020-5nnv5az/index.html.

Zimbabwe – A Bulawayo couple has sued the Population Service International Zimbabwe and Health Minister David Parirenyatwa for allegedly circumcising their 10-year-old son without their consent. Shooter Ngwenya and Thando Mukwevho filed their summons on August 9, saying their child suffered long days and sleepless nights of excruciating pain and the experience has traumatized him. The ritual is a taboo within the family. www.afri-ca.cgtm.com/.

Circumcised men not safe sex partners

“Medically circumcised older men [40 years or older] in a rural South African community had higher HIV prevalence than uncircumcised men, suggesting that the effect of selection into circumcision may be stronger than the biological efficacy of circumcision in preventing HIV acquisition. The impression given from circumcision policy and dissemination of prior trial findings that those who are circumcised are safer sex partners may be incorrect in this age group and needs to be countered by interventions, such as educational campaigns.” Are circumcised men safer sex partners? Findings from the HAALSI cohort in rural South Africa. Rosenberg MS, et al. August 1, 2018. *PLoS ONE* 13(8): e0201445.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201335>.

Circumcision: A critical assessment of recent evidence

“In December 2014, an anonymous working group under the United States’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a draft of the first-ever federal recommendations regarding male circumcision. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ circumcision policy from 2012 – but in contrast to the more recent 2015 policy from the Canadian Paediatric Society as well as prior policies (still in force) from medical associations in Europe and Australasia – the CDC suggested that the benefits of the surgery outweigh the risks. In this article, we provide a brief scientific and conceptual analysis of the CDC’s assessment of benefit versus risk, and argue that it deserves a closer look. Although we set aside the burgeoning bioethical debate surrounding the moral permissibility of performing non-therapeutic circumcisions on healthy minors, we argue that, from a scientific and medical perspective, current evidence suggests that such circumcision is not an appropriate public health measure for developed countries such as the United States.” Circumcision of male infants and children as a public health measure in developed countries: A critical assessment of recent evidence. Frisch M, Earp BD. *Glob Public Health*, 2018 May;13(5):26-641.

Circumcision Complications

“Circumcision has a complication rate higher than previously recognized. Most patients with late complications after circumcision received an operative circumcision revision. Clinicians should weigh the surgical risks against the reported medical benefits of circumcision when counseling parents about circumcision.” A longitudinal population analysis of cumulative risks of circumcision. Ya-Ching Hung, MD, MPH, et al, MA (Cantab), Peter T. Masiakos, MD, MS, and Cassandra M. Kelleher, MD. *Journal of Surgical Research*. January 2019 (233) 111-117.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2018.07.069>

“The incidence of post-circumcision complications at 2 years is much higher than expected at 11.5%, but does not appear to be influenced by age of circumcision, healthcare setting or a rural vs. urban location. A minority of subjects needed reoperation during the ensuing 2 years.” Glen Lau, Jaewhan Kim, Anthony Schaeffer. *The Societies for Pediatric Urology*. 2018 Program.

Early Deaths Following Circumcision in USA, 2001-2010

“We sought to quantify early deaths following neonatal circumcision (same hospital admission) and to identify factors associated with such mortality. We performed a retrospective analysis of all patients who underwent circumcision while hospitalized during the first 30 days of life from 2001 - 2010 using the National Inpatient Sample (NIS). Over 10 years, 200 early deaths were recorded . . . subjects who died following newborn circumcision were more likely to have associated co-morbid conditions . . . Recognizing these factors could inform clinical and parental decisions, potentially reducing associated risks.” Factors Associated with Early Deaths Following Neonatal Male Circumcision in the United States, 2001 - 2010. Brian D. Earp, Veerajalandhar Allareddy, Veerasathpurush Allareddy, Alexandre T. Rotta. *Clinical Pediatrics*. August 2018.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00099922818790060>.

Evolutionary Saga of Circumcision from a Religious Perspective

“Circumcision is the oldest surgical operation known to mankind. It probably originated as a less radical form of genital mutilation inflicted on prisoners of war. Over time it was adopted by the Egyptian priesthood and nobility, perhaps inspired by the mythology of Osiris. In turn, circumcision became part of the Jewish and Muslim religious cultures.

“In contrast, ancient Greeks valued an intact prepuce, as evident from the nude figures of Renaissance art. In the 19th century, circumcision was touted as a treatment for excessive masturbation, seizures, epilepsy, and paraplegia. Adoption of the procedure by medical science was almost akin to a religious belief. By the mid-20th century, it was widely performed on male infants on the pretext of phimosis when the prepuce was not retractable. In 1949, Gairdner documented that the tight prepuce of infants gradually becomes retractile as childhood progresses. Thus, childhood circumcision solely for non-retractile prepuce is unnecessary, which is the foundation for modern anti-circumcision movements. Venkatachalam Raveenthiran.

Journal of Pediatric Surgery, July 2018. Vol 53(7):1440-1443. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2018.03.001>

A critique of Raveenthiran’s ‘Reply to letter to the Editor: Tracing the origins of circumcision’. Moreton S. *Pediatr Surg*. 2018 Dec 28. pii: S0022-3468(18)30805-4. doi: 10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2018.11.016.

Foreskin Reconstruction

“The circumcision of males is emphatically linked to numerous sexual dysfunctions. Many of the purported benefits do not hold up to the scrutiny of extensive literature surveys. Involuntary circumcision, particularly when not medically warranted, is also associated with many psychological and emotional traumas. Current methods to reconstruct the ablated tissue have significant drawbacks and produce a simple substitute that merely imitates the natural foreskin.

“Extracellular matrix–based scaffolds have been shown to be highly effective in the repair and regeneration of soft tissues; however, due to the unique nature of the foreskin tissue, commercially available biomaterial scaffolds would yield poor results. Therefore, this study discusses the development and evaluation of a tissue engineering scaffold derived from decellularized human foreskin extracellular matrix for foreskin reconstruction . . . [R]esults indicate that the derived foreskin dermal matrix may be suitable in a regenerative approach in the reconstruction of the human foreskin.” The development of a decellularized extracellular matrix–based biomaterial scaffold derived from human foreskin for the purpose of foreskin reconstruction in circumcised males. Valeria Purpura, Elena Bondioli, Eric J Cunningham, Giovanni De Luca, Daniela Capirossi, Evandro Nigrisoli, Tyler Drozd, Matthew Serody, Vincenzo Aiello, Carlo A Cirioni, and Davide Melandri. *Journal of Tissue Engineering*, Volume 9:1-11. DOI: 10.1177/2041731418812613.

Meta-analysis of HIV-acquisition studies incomplete

“The authors of a recent meta-analysis of studies into male circumcision and HIV described their findings as ‘compelling.’ We disagree.... Given the effectiveness of condoms, the lack of consistent findings on national levels, the methodologically flawed RCTs, the lack of translational research, and the impressive potential uptake and effectiveness of pre-exposure prophylaxis, circumcision as an intervention to prevent HIV infection should be treated with greater skepticism.” Meta-analysis of HIV-acquisition studies incomplete and unstable. Robert S. Van Howe, MD, FAAP, and Gregory J. Boyle, PhD, DSc, FAPS. 10/31/18. www.bjuinternational.com/letters/metha-analysis-circumcision-incomplete-unstable/.

Penile Cancer

“Although penile cancer can be a debilitating disease, several of the known risk factors are modifiable. Public health campaigns aimed to increase awareness, promote better hygiene, and deploy HPV vaccines have had varied success at decreasing disease burden. Focus should be placed on implementing such interventions in developing countries and at-risk populations.” Penile cancer epidemiology and risk factors: a contemporary review. Douglawi A,

Masterson TA. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pub-med/30566506>. *PLoS One*. 2018 Dec 19;13(12):e0209172. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0209172. eCollection 2018.

Prepuce Sparing for Treatment of Phimosis

“The desire to preserve the prepuce is often based on cultural norms. Recently, the concept of ‘genital autonomy’ has been invoked to delay circumcision (or any genital altering procedure) until the individual reaches maturity and can make his or her own decision. However, some uncircumcised boys develop one or more episodes of balanitis resulting in scarring of the prepuce and pathologic phimosis which is difficult to treat. Herein we report on the management of severe phimosis and preputial scarring using preputial Z-plasties.

“Excision of the scarred preputial ring results in a circular suture line, which is in essence a straight line, curved and connected at each end, and this is likely to contract over time. The principle of Z-plasty can be exploited to elongate and interrupt the straight line, preventing contraction.” Benson M, Hanna MK. Prepuce sparing: Use of Z-plasty for treatment of phimosis and scarred foreskin. *2018 Journal of Pediatric Urology*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jpuro.2018.04.031/.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

“Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the most common cause of postneonatal infant death. The *allostatic load hypothesis* posits that SIDS is the result of perinatal cumulative painful, stressful, or traumatic exposures that tax neonatal regulatory systems. To test it, we explored the relationships between SIDS and two common stressors, male neonatal circumcision (MNC) and prematurity, using latitudinal data from 15 countries and over 40 US states during the years 1999 - 2016. We used linear regression analyses and likelihood ratio tests to calculate the association between SIDS and the stressors. SIDS prevalence was significantly and positively correlated with MNC and prematurity rates. MNC explained 14.2% of the variability of SIDS’s male bias in the US, reminiscent of the Jewish myth of Lilith, the killer of infant males. Combined, the stressors increased the likelihood of SIDS. Ecological analyses are useful to generate hypotheses but cannot provide strong evidence of causality. Biological plausibility is provided by a growing body of experimental and clinical evidence linking adversary preterm and early-life events with SIDS. Together with historical evidence, our findings emphasize the necessity of cohort studies that consider these environmental stressors with the aim of improving the identification of at-risk infants and reducing infant mortality.” Adversarial childhood events are associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): an ecological study. Eran Elhaik. *bioRxiv*. June 7, 2018. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/339465>.

Austria – Austria’s constitutional court has ruled that people not identifying as male or female should have the right to do so when completing official forms and that sex-assigning surgeries in newborns and children can only be justified in exceptional cases. The court, responding to a request from someone who identifies as intersex, invoked the *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) to insist that the legislature introduce the option of “other” or “inter” where civil register forms ask a person’s gender. The court stressed in its ruling that Article 8 of the ECHR guarantees the right to “an individual sexual identity” and protects “in particular, people with an alternative sexual identity”. The judgment also added that families’ fears of stigmatisation should never serve as a motivation for intervention into sex development. Last November Germany became the first European nation where the justice system called for the official recognition of a “third sex”, a decision followed in May by the Netherlands. Though some have hailed this as a step forward for LGBT rights, others have claimed that there needs to be an overhaul of the “archaic” systems which require citizens to register “something as personal and intimate as gender/sex”.

<https://www.news.com.au/world/europe/austrian-court-moves-to-recognise-third-gender/news-story/5d4de1db70294f4983adce9432db3bec>.

Australia – The Rationalist Society of Australia recently published *Genital Autonomy White Paper*, which states, “The RSA recognises the inherent right of all human beings to security of person, in particular their right to physical and mental integrity and bodily autonomy. The RSA rejects all non-consensual, medically unnecessary genital cutting or modifications, and calls upon the medical community and state and federal governments to educate the public of the harms of these procedures, and to change the law to ensure all children are protected from genital mutilation.”

<https://www.rationalist.com.au/campaigns/genital-autonomy-white-paper/>. 2019.

Burkina Faso – About 50 girls, some as young as four, were treated in hospital after undergoing FGM. Two women, along with some of the girls’ relatives, were arrested. Younger girls are being targeted for FGM because they are less likely to talk. FGM has been outlawed in Burkina Faso since 1996.

www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/18.

England – 28 Too Many proudly announced its groundbreaking report on *The Law and FGM – An Overview of 28 African Countries*. While 22 out of 28 FGM-practicing countries in Africa have national legislation criminalizing FGM, in many countries legislation fails to protect women and girls. The anti-FGM laws are rarely enforced and the absence of prosecutions puts millions at risk. In addition, 6 of the 28 are without laws, meaning FGM is legal there. Laws are important because they are a statement of intent and they demonstrate a commitment to eradicate FGM, but they need

to be applied alongside education on the rights of women and girls and form part of the community engagement around changing cultural and social norms. Individual country reports are available at

<https://www.28toomany.org/thematic/law-and-fgm/>.

Germany – On December 12 six years ago, the German Parliament abolished any legal protection from boys against medically unnecessary foreskin amputations. *MOGIS e.V.* presents a new video series with several members of the working group and cooperating partners, *One Minute for Genital Autonomy!* The clips appear on a separate playlist on our Youtube channel, on our website, and on Facebook and Twitter: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDA2beFMtAJEGdHKzklf4yg>. The series is more than just a remembrance of this black day for children’s rights — it reports medical and legal issues, offers information, and documents intercultural partnerships. It’s about human rights, which is everyone’s business! Please share and watch, *One Minute for Genital Autonomy!*

Iceland – Icelandic physicians and some of Belgium’s top doctors – 500 of them – backed a bill to criminalize nonmedical circumcision of boys in the Scandinavian island nation. The physicians cited the World Medical Association’s *Declaration of Helsinki* on ethical principles.

India – Parents of a 29-day-old infant, who died due to alleged medical negligence, approached the District Medical Officer with a complaint alleging their child died due to blood loss after circumcision and seeking action against the doctor who did the surgery. The doctor didn’t answer their night call and the next day referred them to a surgeon who was unavailable on Sunday. The parents took the baby to a private hospital, which referred them to Medical College Hospital. The baby was admitted but died shortly thereafter. 6/2/2018. www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2018/jun/02/kerala-infant-death-medical-negligence-alleged-1822661.html.

Israel – Bloodstained Men & Friends demonstrate.



Norway – Breaking the law, two Norwegian hospitals refuse to provide non-medical circumcision to boys under three. Stavanger University Hospital and Haukeland University Hospital are not cooperating. The ban is in violation of Norwegian law, which requires public hospitals to offer ritual circumcision services through their own facilities and staff or through a contractor. Across Scandinavia, activists are promoting a ban on the non-medical male circumcision with the backing of liberals, who say the practices are cruel. [timesofisrael.com/norwegian-hospitals-refuse-to-assist-inj-circumcisions/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/norwegian-hospitals-refuse-to-assist-inj-circumcisions/). 7/12/18.

South Africa – A total of 21 boys died in South Africa as a result of botched circumcision since summer initiation began in November. The Eastern Cape province, a hotbed of illegal circumcision, reported 17 deaths and North West and the Western Cape provinces reported two deaths respectively, despite an intensified crackdown on illegal initiation schools. 12/18/18. www.china.org.cn/world/.

Somalia – Two sisters, Asiya and Khadija Abdi Warsame, 10 and 11, bled to death following FGM and a third, Mumtaz Qorane, 10, died from tetanus three days after her circumcision the next week. 9/17/18. www.voanews.com.

Uganda – As the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni launched his fast-track initiative on ending HIV and AIDS by 2030, he strongly criticized circumcision as a way to prevent contraction of the virus but rather asked people to refrain themselves from having unprotected sex. HIV/AIDS is spread by contact and it is very easy to avoid. www.pmidaily.com/news/2018/18/10/museveni-castigates-circumcision-as-awat-to-prevent-hiv-aids.html.

Uganda's Ministry of Health has threatened to take actions against medical officers allegedly involved in forced circumcision of babies. The warning came from State Minister for Health, Sarah Opendi, responding to concerns raised by West Budama North Member of Parliament, Richard Othieno Okoth. He told the house he received several complaints from parents forced to have their male babies circumcised, especially in Busolwe Hospital in Butaleja District. The Minister said the medical personnel involved in such acts could be held personally liable. "According to the Safe Male Circumcision Policy, 2010, medical male circumcision should be promoted and is available for all age groups. In Uganda, circumcision in males below 18 years is carried out after written consent is obtained from the parents, guardians or caretakers while for males above 18

years, a written consent is sought from the individual before the procedure," Opendi said. Only two circumcisions based on clinical diagnosis were carried out on babies aged two years or less. "The clinical diagnosis stated that both children had a condition known as phimosis*," Opendi explained. "I therefore request the Hon Member to provide details of children and parents so that we can follow these cases and take necessary action against the staff after ascertaining the truth." <https://chimpreports.com/health-ministry-warns-against-forced-circumcision-of-babies/>.
*Phimosis is normal in infants and children

Patients in Butaleja and other neighboring districts in Uganda are distressed after health workers subjected them to forced circumcision in exchange for medical care. The complaint was raised on the floor of Parliament by West Budama North MP, Okoth Othieno, who requested Parliament compel the Ministry of Health to explain why the health workers at Busolwe General Hospital are forcing parents to circumcise their boys in exchange for medical treatment. Mothers who "refuse to have their children circumcised are denied medical services. This amounts to imposing an alien culture on these people." In her ruling, Speaker Rebecca Kadaga asked the Ministry of Health to investigate the matter and report back to Parliament. www.Kampalapost.com. 7/12/18.

In the southern Ugandan town of Mbale, a non-coercive circumcision campaign ill-advisedly aimed at reducing HIV transmission has metastaticized into forced circumcision. More than 40 men have been subjected to circumcision due to a disturbing mix of cultural and science-based values. Police in Mbale fired teargas to disperse men who forced circumcision on people outside their tribe. Since the Bamasaba tribe began its campaign, 220 people have been circumcised. *The Atlantic*. 6/21/12.

In Uganda's Kween District, families have been living in fear, watching helplessly as their daughters are dragged from their homes and forcibly subjected to FGM by armed gangs. FGM was outlawed in 2010. Lawrence Cherop Mangusho, Kween County MP, said it started as a stealth act done at night, but steadily progressed to being done in broad daylight under the watch of everyone, including the police. The gangs move in groups of about 100 people wielding sticks and sharp instruments to threaten anyone who tries to stop them. At one point, they overpowered the police, and one gang member threatened to cut a woman officer. About 100 girls have undergone FGM since December 1. *New Vision*, 1/21/19.

USA

California – On May 7, Worldwide Day of Genital Autonomy, attendees of the symposia, GA-America, Bay Area Intactivists, Bloodstained Men, and Intact America demonstrated at the Ferry Building.



Photos by James Loewen



Bay Area Intactivists, Bloodstained Men & Their Friends, and Genital Autonomy - America once again participated in the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade. Every year the response to

our contingency becomes more enthusiastic. The thumbs up along with the cheers in our favor become all the more prominent.

When we'd made our way up Market Street to the Civic Center, we held our signs there. One man, Sam, who you see me with in the photo here, came up and thanked me for doing my work.



From Los Angeles, "Why is the Reform Movement Scared of Circumcision?" Eli Ungar-Sargon. <https://jewschool.com/2018/03/165297/2why-is-the-reform-movement-scared-of-circumcixsion/>. March 2018.

Georgia – The first nonprofit surgical center for female genital mutilation victims opened in the Atlanta area. Johns Creek is the new home for the nation's first nonprofit center devoted entirely to the surgical and psychological treatment of victims of FGM. Dr. T. Wayne Bloodworth, a cosmetic surgeon and gynecologist who trained in Paris, is founder, owner, and medical director of The Surgery Center

for FGM. "Beyond surgery, these patients need psychological counseling and special care for the trauma they experienced," said Dr. Bloodworth. The World Health Organization estimates there are 500,000 victims of female genital mutilation currently residing in the United States. 5/14/18.

Illinois – Ron Low, founder of TLC Tugger, reports the organization has a new website: <http://TLCTugger.com>, and says, "You'll like the streamlined layout, and features, like the Media Gallery where you can view our Howard Stern TV appearance. There are new products, downloadable gift certificates, and visitors can leave reviews for products they've used." 12/18/18.

Massachusetts Intactivists take to Boston streets: <https://masslawyersweekly.com/2018/08/09/backed-by-member-of-bar-anti-circumcision-activists-take-to-boston-streets/>.

New York – *Intaction* announced a joint letter-writing campaign for parents, the *Tell the Doc Campaign*. This is an opportunity for parents to express their concerns about the AAP's circumcision policy in a gentle, positive way. A special website has been set up at <http://telltthedoc.org>, where parents can enter information. The site will automatically send a letter to your healthcare provider and forward a letter to the AAP at the conclusion of the campaign. 5/1/18.

Pennsylvania – West Goshen police arrested a Westtown man who allegedly made multiple angry telephone calls to staff at the Chester County Hospital, at one point allegedly threatening to "shoot up the maternity ward," according to a criminal complaint filed earlier this month. The man said he suffers to this day from the forced circumcision he underwent as a baby born at the hospital in January 1995. "Because of this circumcision, he now suffers from painful erections when sexually aroused," the complaint, written by West Goshen Detective David Maurer, reads. The man said the pain, "has caused him to suffer...with mental health issues as a result." He said he finds it difficult to have sex with partners, and "believes that if he had his skin he would not suffer from this pain." *Daily Local News*. 7/29/18.

Washington – DOC is preparing its new website, *DoctorsOpposingForcibleRetraction.org*, in response to a promise made at the last symposium. The major 'intactivist' organizations will combine forces to combat forcible foreskin retraction (FFR) is forbidden by the American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical societies, but

common nonetheless. A new study shows that, by the age of six years, 43% of intact boys in the USA have endured this *iatrogenic* (doctor caused) injury. DOC's 'hotline' for parents assists aggrieved FFR families several times each week. DOC has more than 1,000 FFR cases on file. For many years, DOC copied state health authority complaints to the AAP headquarters. No reply or comment, ever. But the issue is rising among informed parents of intact boys. Hopefully, DOC's educational outreach will nudge the AAP into sternly – and effectively – forbidding FFR to its members and to those of other specialties.

Washington, DC – Leading Republicans and Democrats on the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs

Committee joined forces to urge Iceland to stand down from a proposal to ban circumcision. “While Jewish and Muslim populations in Iceland may be small, your country’s ban could be exploited by those who stoke xenophobia and anti-Semitism in countries with more diverse populations,” wrote Congressman Ed Royce, the Republican chairman of the committee, and Eliot Entgel, its top Democrat, in that April 5 letter to the Iceland embassy in Washington, DC. “As a partner nation, we urge your government to stop this intolerant bill from advancing any further,” the letter said. **Shame on our legislators!** As medical ethicist Gert van Dijk says, “The right to bodily integrity is more important than the right to religious freedom”. And, in fact, the right to bodily integrity secures and protects the child’s right to freedom of religion.

Bulletin Board

CA Senator Introduced Bill Limiting Genital Surgery on Intersex Children

Senator Scott Wiener’s bill, released February 4, would prohibit doctors from performing surgery on children born with genitals that don't fit a single gender unless medically necessary or the child consents. The bill would make California the first state to make surgeries performed on intersex infants illegal.

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2019/02/04/san-francisco-state-senator-new-bill-limit-genitalia-surgery-intersex-children/>

Ralph Nader Interview with Dr. George C. Denniston, founder of Doctors Opposing Circumcision (D.O.C.). You can listen to the interview at <https://nadar.org/>.

Bay Area Intactavists’ New Banner at the San Francisco Baby Fair



Jeff Brown, Vee Savage, and Marilyn Milos, photo by Frank McGinness

Circumcision Can Suck My Dick, Morgan Lane Bennett’s powerful and passionate plea to parents and others, is an epic history lesson in three parts: religious, medical, and cultural. “There are three main ‘reasons’ given for this institutionalized atrocity: religious nonsense, the medical industry’s greed, and society’s overall insanity. In this video, I crush them all!”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9QTnVQ3ojM&fbclid=IwAR1nT5kf bOiOFxZpCZvozYMyYAEI7Uu-kKDj9ZjhaqRAvVbFk1FMAhdNfM>

The Circumcision Movie is in its final editing stages, and midwives/producers Emily Rumsey and Emily Fitzgerald are working on illustrations, graphic design, music, and final editing. The message of the movie is that routine circumcision has no medical benefit and violates bodily autonomy. The producers educate parents with straight forward and honest discussion, from lots of perspectives and disciplines. They hope this film will be a decision-making tool that gently leads parents to rethink routine circumcision and to choose to keep their sons intact. The release date in 2019 is yet to be determined. The producers are financing the movie themselves and with the help of generous donors. Please consider making a donation to help them finish the project. <http://www.thecircumcisionmovie.com/donate>.

Publisher:	Genital Autonomy - America
Editor:	Marilyn Milos RN
Graphics:	Ron Bean Graphics
Consultants:	Ron Bean, Ken Brierley, and Benjamin Van Howe



Worldwide Day of Genital Autonomy



Tuesday, May 7, 2019

**The 7th Anniversary of the Cologne High Court Ruling,
granting boys the right to self-determination,
will be celebrated around the world.**

**San Francisco Ferry Building Demonstration
10am - 1pm**

and

**Jonathon Conte Memorial Luncheon (short walk)
1:15 - 3pm**



GA America America

Post Office Box 2512
San Anselmo, CA 94979-2512

Telephone: 415-488-9883
www.gaamerica.org

Address Service Requested

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
US POSTAGE
PAID
UNICORN GROUP