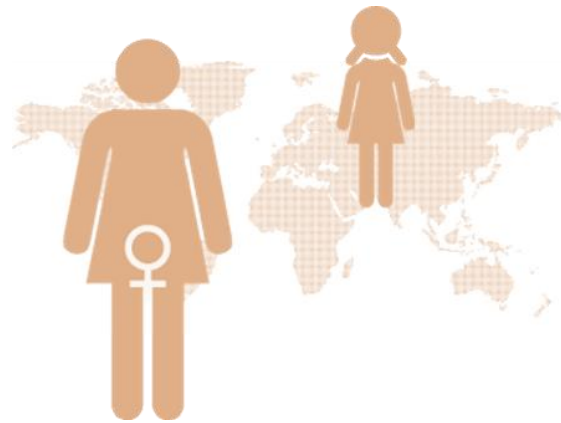


# Children Clinic for FGM/C:

Prevention, Care, Safeguarding, Medico-legal aspects



**Deborah Hodes**, Consultant Community Paediatrician

University College London Hospitals, UK

# Outline

- Background and FGM Types
- Worldwide and UK prevalence
- Experience in the children's clinic in London
- Prevention and prosecution in the UK

# NEWS

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England | Regions

# THE TIMES

## Thousands more FGM sufferers are uncovered by pregnancy screening

## Charity warns of FGM 'part place in England

# The Telegraph

## FGM affects 137,000 women in : reveals shocking new study

A new study - published today, ahead of the UK's first Girl Summit - shows a significant increase in the number of girls and women undergoing female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Radhika Sanghani reports

News > Politics

## Make lessons on FGM compulsory, say doctors

# EveningStandard.

# NEWS

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## Failure to stop FGM is a 'national scandal', say MPs

jobs | dating | more ▾ | UK edition ▾

# theguardian

website of the year

## Anti-FGM campaign launched in UK to mark global day of opposition



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# FGM: WHO Definition

Comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons

(WHO 2016)

**Violence against women and girls**

# A Rights Based Approach

## UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):

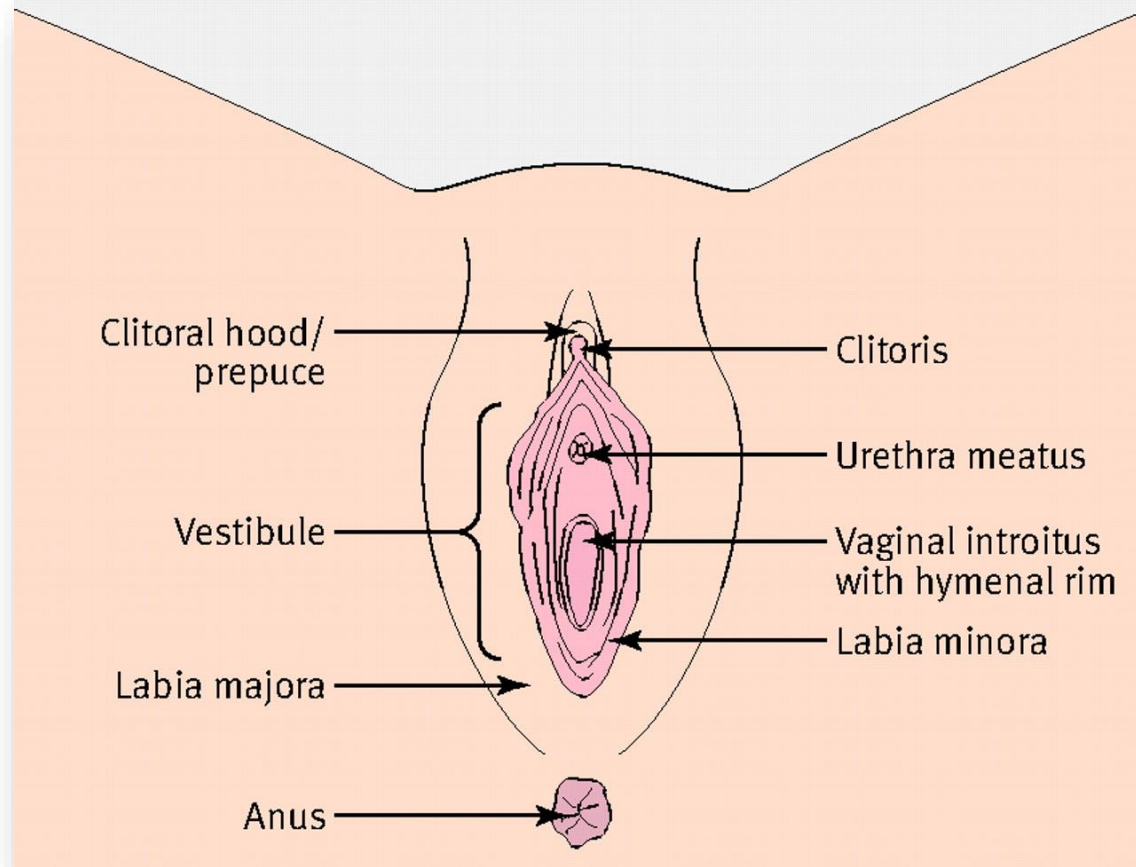
### ▶ Article 24

*“Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.. ”*

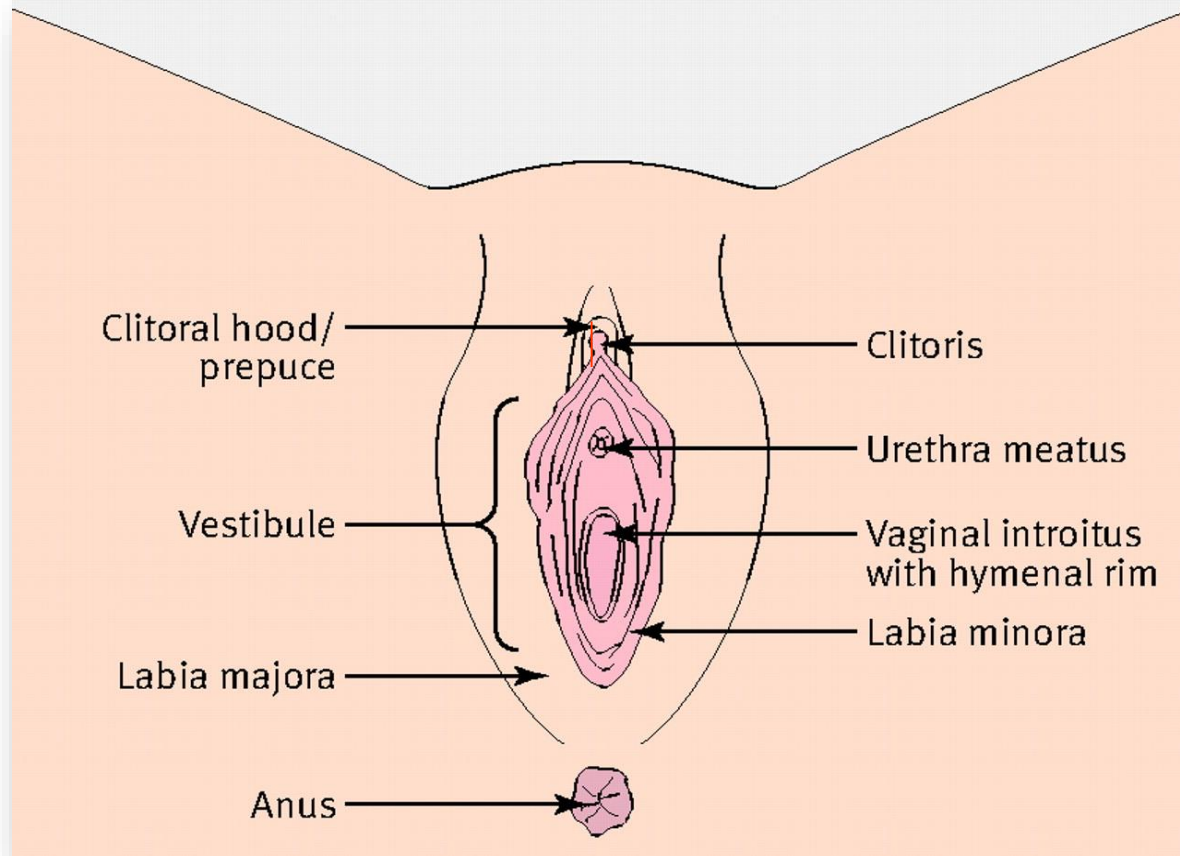
### ▶ Article 19

*“...protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.... ”*

# FGM Types



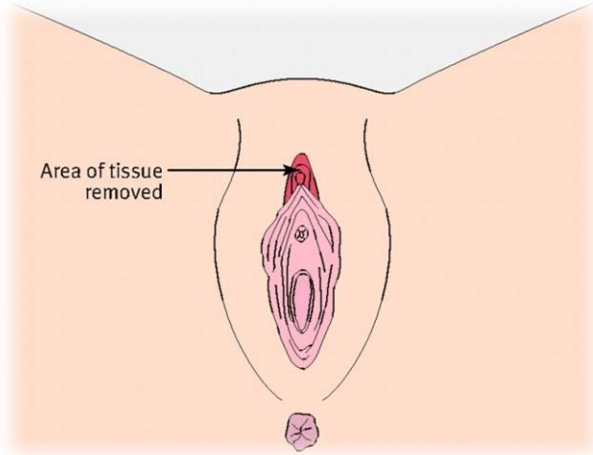
## Normal Female Genital Anatomy



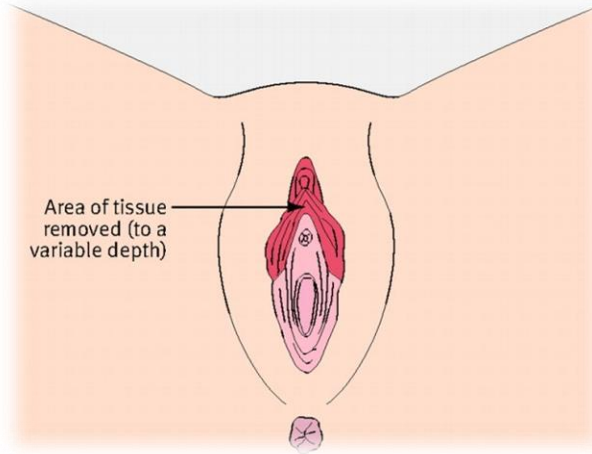
**WHO: Type 4**

**UNICEF: 'cut, no flesh removed/nicked'**

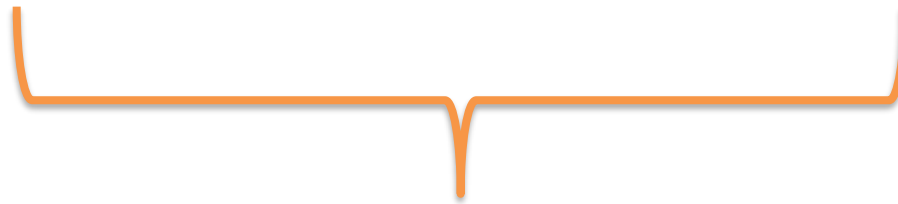
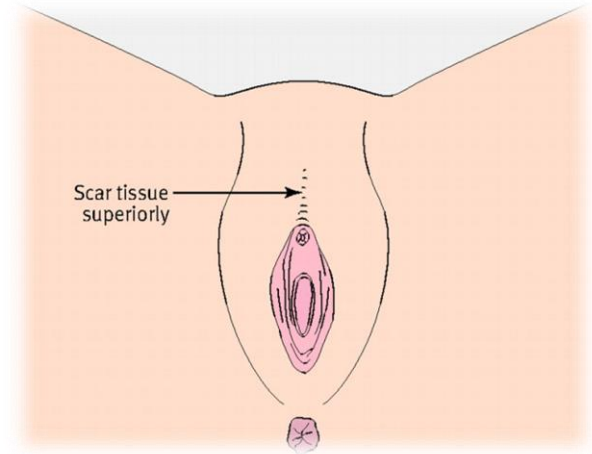




**WHO Type 1**

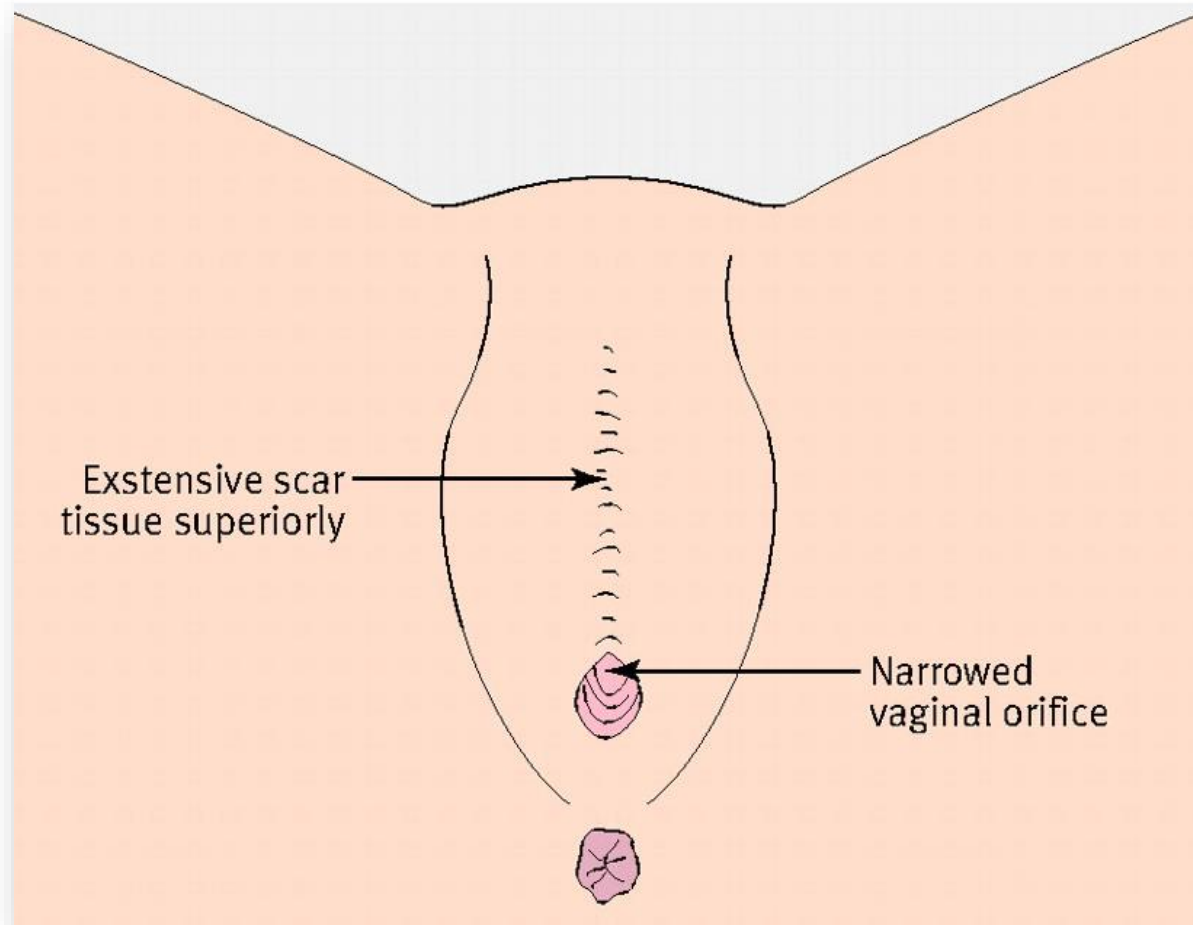


**WHO Type 2**



**UNICEF: 'flesh removed'**

# Infibulation



**WHO: Type 3**

**UNICEF: 'sewn closed'**

# Complications: immediate

- Pain
- Haemorrhage
- Infection
- Injury to other organs causing fistulae
- Urinary retention due to pain and swelling
- Death

# Complications: long term

- Failure to heal
- Recurrent abscess, dermoid/inclusion cysts, keloid
- Recurrent urinary infections
- Blood borne infections
- Gynaecological
- Obstetric
- Psychological - PTSD

# Beliefs/Misconceptions

- Social obligation/ acceptance/ rite of passage
- Reducing sexual desire, fear of clitoris and sexuality, keeping virginity
- Religious requirement
- Readiness for marriage and adulthood
- Purify the body/clean, aesthetics
- Protects against material want

# Influences UNICEF 2013

## Protective factors

- Discussing with husband/friend
- Knowing law has been/will be implemented
- TV, media, global debate
- Men's attitude and knowledge
- Knowing an uncut person

## Risk factors

- Mother or sister cut
- Isolated mother
- Grandmother is influential
- Little information and discussion about FGM
- Communities have impression it is not taken seriously by statutory sector

# When is at risk of FGM

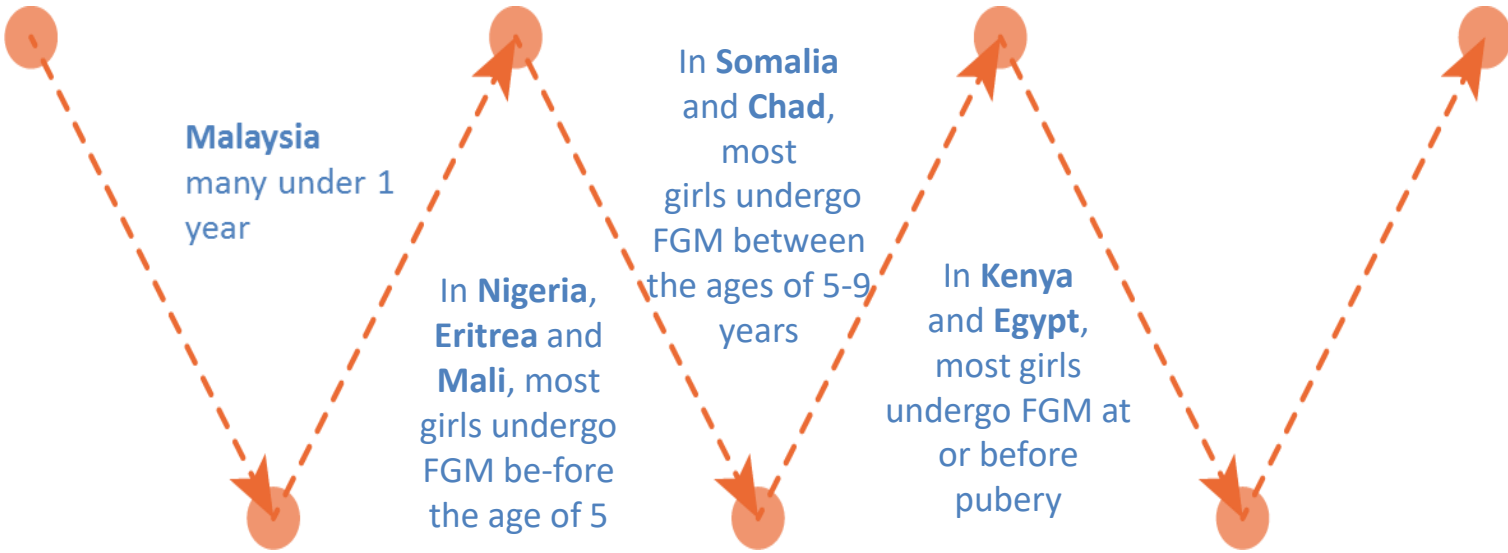
In 50% of cases FGM is carried out before the age of five

At birth

Infancy

Teenagers

After birth of a child



Neonatal period

Childhood

Before or at marriage

# The UK Law

## 1985 Female Circumcision Prohibition Act

- Illegal for a UK national or permanent resident to mutilate the whole or any part of a girl or woman's genitalia
- Or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM in the UK

## 2003 Female Genital Mutilation Act

- Illegal to arrange for FGM to be carried out abroad, even in countries where the practice may be legal





# The Law



2015 Serious Crime Act:

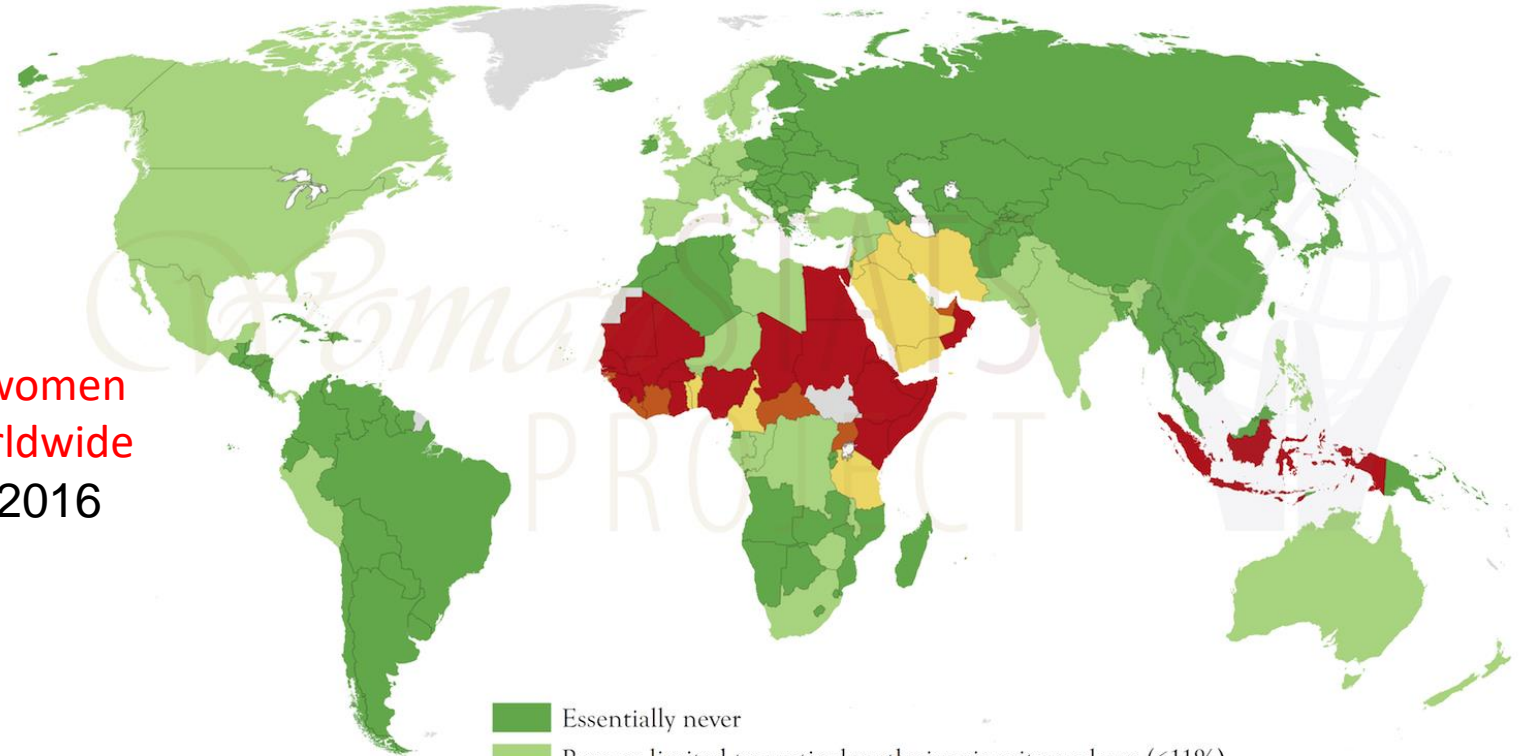
- Mandatory reporting to police of under 18s with FGM
- FGM protection order
- Failing to protect a girl from FGM
- Anonymity of victims of FGM for life

# Outline

- Background and FGM Types
- **Worldwide and UK prevalence**
- Experience in the children's clinic in London
- Prosecution and prevention in the UK

# Prevalence of FGM

*Scaled 2011*



200 million women  
and girls worldwide  
UNICEF 2016



- Essentially never
- Rare or limited to particular ethnic minority enclaves ( $\leq 11\%$ )
- 11-25% of women have had their genitals cut
- 26-50% of women have had their genitals cut
- More than half of women have had their genitals cut
- No Data

(This scale includes both mild and severe forms of cutting.)

# Estimated prevalence of FGM in England and Wales

Equality Now and City University 2014

2011 Office of National Statistics Census data of numbers of migrants born in countries where FGM is practised and where rates of FGM are known

## Over the age of 15 years:

- Total of 127,000 FGM survivors

## Under the age of 15 years:

- 10,000 born outside the UK and likely to have had FGM before entry to the UK
- 60,000 born in the UK to women from FGM practising countries so may be at risk
- May be an underestimate
- No information about continuation of the practice after migration



# Mandatory reporting 2015

**Disclose** they have had FGM - using terminology

- Cut
- Circumcised
- Sunna

**Signs/symptoms** appearing to show FGM

- If you have no reason to believe it was for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth
- Includes genital piercings and tattoos for non-medical reasons

# FGM Enhanced Data Set 2016/17

## Department of Health

- **5,391** newly recorded cases of FGM
- 87% of cases were pregnant women
- 139 cases (2.6%) were under 18 years
  
- 57 cases (1%) were reported as performed in the UK and data was available in 50 and all were genital piercings.

# British Paediatric Surveillance Unit Study

## CASE NOTIFICATION by paediatricians 2015-2017

<b>Total Notifications</b>	<b>138</b>
Excluded	25
Duplicates	6
Confirmed Cases	96
Awaiting Data / Review	9
Unable to Follow Up	2

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# Dedicated Paediatric FGM Clinic

- Established September 2014 following increasing referrals
- Clinical Staff
  - Consultant Paediatrician
  - Consultant Gynaecologist
  - Child Psychotherapist
  - Play Specialist
  - Clinical Nurse Specialist



# Consultation



- Meet with child (Play therapist/CNS)
- Discussion with police/social worker
- Meet with parents/guardians (+/-child)
- Examination with consent & colposcope
- Findings and subsequent steps explained to child and family
- Further discussion with psychotherapist offered to all
- BBV screening offered to all children
- Reports as appropriate

# The Child's Journey

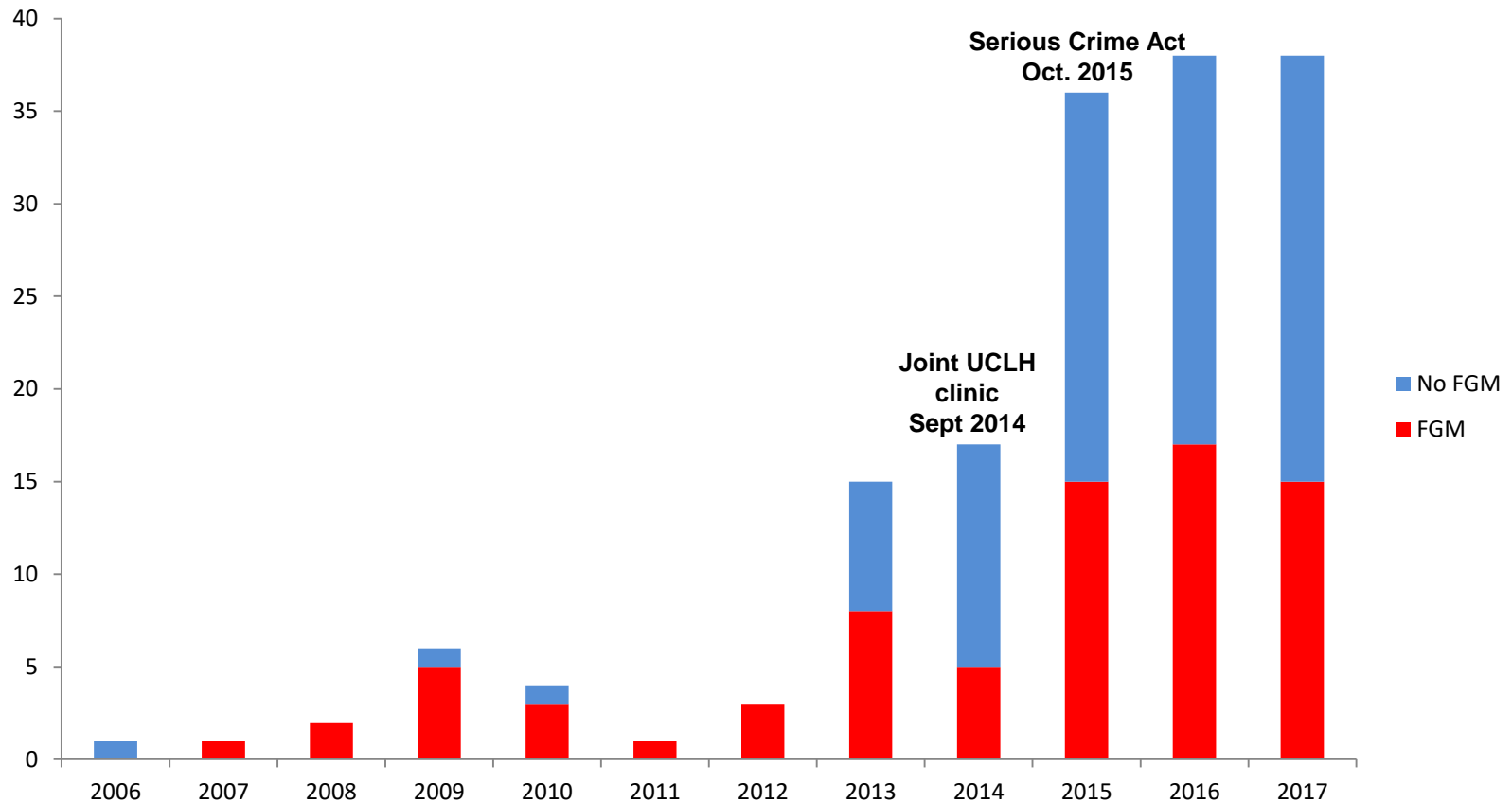
- Photobook with Play Specialist



# PHOTO JOURNEY - GIRLS

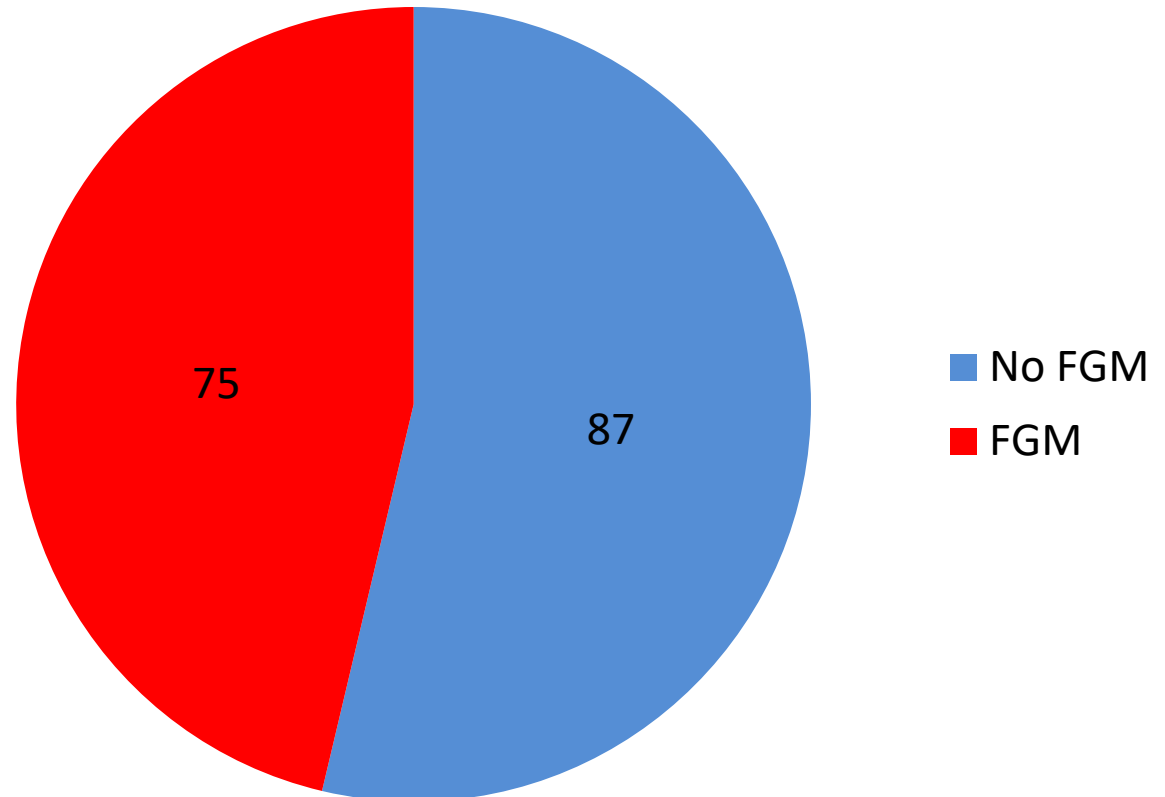


# 10 years clinic timeline



# Referrals

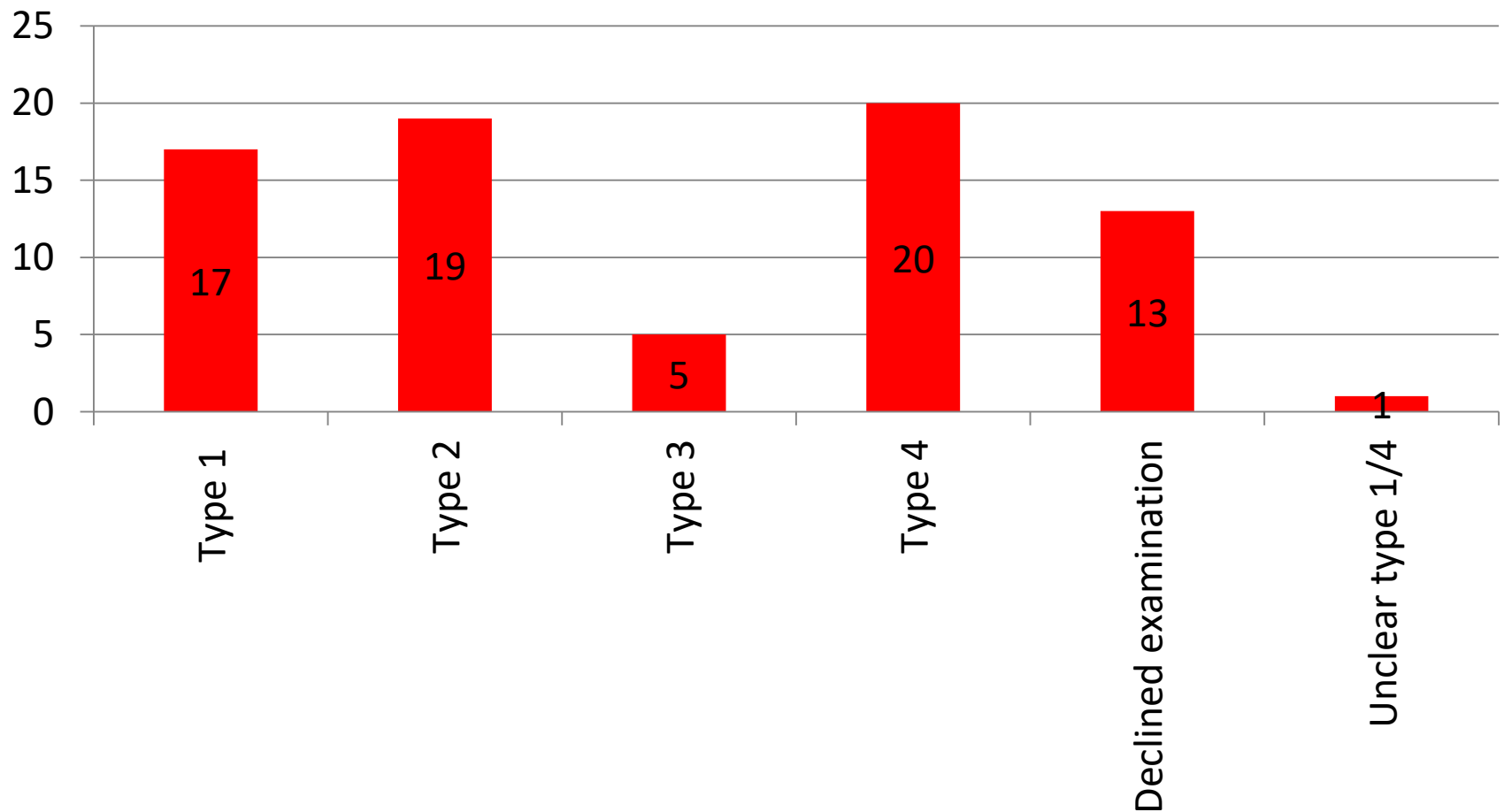
162 children referred to clinic  
Nov 2006 – Dec 2017



## Children with FGM (n=75)

- FGM mean age: 5 years old (4 weeks – 17 years)
- Presentation to clinic, mean age: 9.5 years (range 22 months – 17 years )
- 64 (85%) had FGM prior to entry to the UK
- 11 (15%) had FGM, illegal under UK/Irish law

# Classification of FGM n= 75





# Case 1

- A 30 year old Malaysian woman, permanent resident in the UK, antenatal booking with the midwife.
- Mother confirmed she and her 4 year old daughter both had circumcision
- The 4 year old was seen in the clinic

# Case 1 outcome

- Normal anatomy which confirmed type 4
- Both parents were distraught being very law abiding citizens and were horrified to hear that they may have done something illegal to their 4 year old.
- In 2012, all parents were urged to have their baby daughters undergo circumcision in Malaysia.

## Case 2

- A mother and her four daughters were referred to the clinic in order to confirm FGM in the oldest 3 girls who had recently come from Somalia to the UK. The visit was also to ensure the youngest child (aged 7) had not had FGM performed in the UK

## Case 2 outcome

17 year old daughter had had FGM at the age of 12.

- Symptoms of a slow urinary stream
- Refused de-infibulation

12 year old twins had a small scar (Type 4) over the clitoral hood and no anatomical changes.

- After explaining the findings, she said, “So I am normal?”

7 year old normal examination.

## Case 3

- A Kenyan Asian family referred by social care.
- Anonymous member of the public who were concerned their daughter had be subjected to FGM.
- Social care full investigation

### Outcome

- non FGM practising community (Indian, Hindu community) and no evidence of FGM on examination no disclosure made.

## Case 4

- A teenager learnt about FGM in school and came to the clinic after telling the teacher she had undergone FGM prior to coming to the UK.
- She wanted us to explain her anatomy
- Later brought her sister to the clinic for the explanation.

# What we have learnt

## Clinical Conclusions

- Evidence of significant medicalisation
- FGM procedures at young age
- Large proportion of Type 4 which can be difficult to identify

## Other findings

- Parents keen for child to be examined especially if FGM denied
- Psychological impact of referral on parents is significant
- Multidisciplinary management is key in paediatric FGM work
- Anonymous reports
- Difficulties in prosecutions in the UK & across the EU

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**INTEGRATE  
BRISTOL**

**F→RWARD**  
*Safeguarding rights & dignity*

fgm  
national  
clinical group

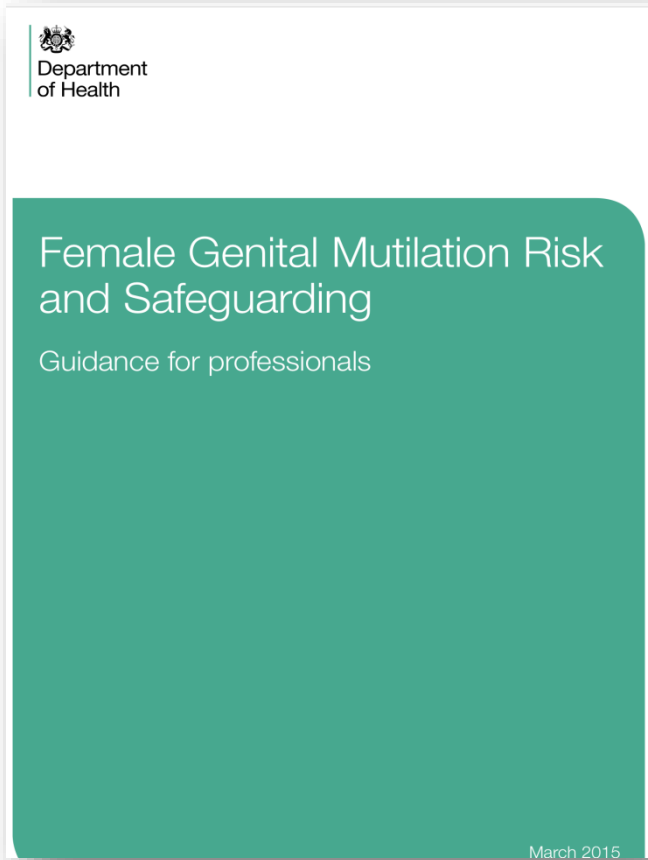
uclh

Equality Now  
A just world for women and girls.

Daughters  
of  
Eve  
"Working to protect and empower girls and young women"

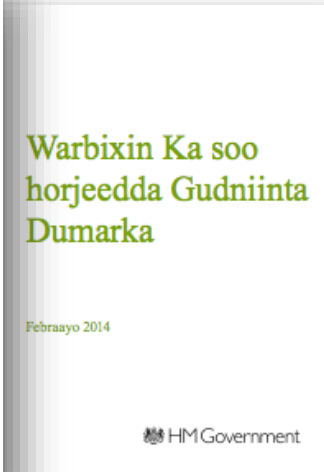
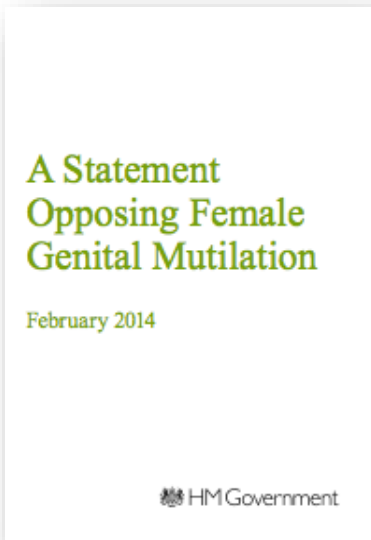
**14 other inner city community groups**

# FGM Prevention Programme



# Home office “FGM Passport”

“Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an extremely harmful practice with devastating health consequences for girls and women...”



# Role of the health professional

- We need to ask...
- Record from birth
- Know who is at risk
- Borough strategy for prevention

# Recent Junior Doctor Case 2015

<https://bererblog.wordpress.com>

- Type 3 FGM in Somalia
- Pre-pregnancy de-infibulation
- Nov 2012 - ventouse delivery & episiotomy with small incision through band of anterior scar tissue obscuring the urethra and preventing catheterisation.
- Single suture was the basis of the prosecution case that it was FGM.
- Jury took under 5 minutes to acquit

**2018 failed prosecution 2 cases**



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# Thank you