

Country: Singapore

Population: 5.399 million

Estimated prevalence among women aged 15-49: Unknown

There have been no studies conducted in Singapore about FGC. It is widely assumed that FGC only occurs amongst Singapore's Malay Muslim community, and therefore it is considered an issue that the majority of Singaporeans do not wish to encroach on. Out of a total Singaporean population of 5.399 million, there are 650,000 Malays. It is assumed that all of the Malays practice FGC in Singapore and therefore the prevalence rate could be 100% amongst this community.

Type practised:

The only forms of FGC practiced in Singapore are **Type I and IV**, where female Malay doctors medically nick or remove the prepuce. It is usually done on babies or prepubescent children by 'mak bidan' or female doctors at Muslim clinics. Their role is to help mothers with bathing and nursing their babies, and also get back into shape after a natural birth with the use of tummy wraps, herbal drinks, herbal applications, massage, and bathing of the newborn baby. Also included in their job description is to 'sunat' girls.

In Singapore, FGC is called 'sunat', and in the 1940s sunat involved cutting off a piece of a girl's prepuce and/or clitoral hood, making it flat instead of naturally covering the top of the clitoris. However, it is now more common to practice a symbolic form of sunat in the form of scraping of the prepuce using a penknife or scissors.

The young age at which the operation is performed prevents young women from remembering the details of the procedure, or even remembering the procedure at all, so mothers and grandmothers sometimes provide accounts of the operation.

Legal status:

FGC is legal in Singapore, and there are no laws or state initiatives regulating the practice.

History of FGC:

Some scholars contend that when Islam spread to Southeast Asia in the 13th century, FGC was also introduced to the region. However, there exists scarce literature on the beginnings of FGC in this area. The most informative source on the incidence of FGC in Southeast Asia can be found in a chapter of a recent anthology about Muslim women's rights. Among the orthodox Muslims the term sunat perempuan or khitan perempuan ('female circumcision') is most commonly used.

Dr. Masayu Zainab Masagos Mohamed, who cuts five to six patients a day at a Singapore clinic, says the procedure is usually carried out on babies or prepubescent children. But it has been done on women of all ages.

Current efforts to abandon FGC:

AWARE, a leading gender equality advocacy group in Singapore provides the only, rather indirect and generic, opposition to FGC through a specific webpage. The AWARE webpage mentions FGC in Singapore and the support it receives from Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), but its focus is on the most extreme forms of FGC in Africa.

Ongoing challenges:

According to MUIS, FGC is compulsory for men and women. It should be done early in life, preferably when still an infant, to avoid complications, pain and embarrassment that occur if done later in life. FGC is

performed by Muslimah doctors and is said to involve the cutting off the membrane on the top most part of the clitoris. Many young women are unaware that they have undergone FGC or what it entails.

In Singapore, the majority of Muslims in Southeast Asia follow the Shafii school of law, which declares FGC as *wajib*, or obligatory. In contrast, the other three Sunni schools, together with the Shia schools, consider FGC a sunnah or a recommended act. FGC is therefore overwhelmingly supported by religious institutions and scholars, subsequently making it difficult to abandon.

In addition, some of the older generations point out that the reason that some young women are wild today is because they are not circumcised, ingraining FGC in Singapore.

Ultimately, FGC remains unchallenged in Singapore and mostly unknown, thus making it very difficult to abandon.

Additional information:

It is suggested that British girls are being flown to Dubai and Singapore for a more medicalised form of FGC.

Those who practice it are often highly educated and aware that there is no medical or spiritual reasons behind FGC but do it because it marks and gives access to a community identity.

Major Languages:

English
 Mandarin
 Chinese Vernaculars

Major religions:

Buddhism – 33.3%	Taoism – 10.9%
Christianity – 18.3%	Hinduism – 5.1%
Islam – 14.7%	Other religions – 0.7%

Resources:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-26084034>
<http://www.mummysq.com/forums/f40/have-you-sunat-your-girls-29826/>
<http://www.courtchallenge.com/news/torstar1.html>
<http://www.theislamicmonthly.com/a-tiny-cut-female-circumcision-in-south-east-asia/>
<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/british-girls-flown-to-singapore-and-dubai-for-medicalised-fgm-9369122.html>
<http://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2014/05/female-genital-mutilation-in-singapore-more-awareness-needed/>
<http://www.stopfgmmideast.org/aware-makes-a-stand-against-female-circumcision-in-islam/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-26084034>
http://www.themodernreligion.com/women/w_circumcision.htm
<http://rilek1corner.com/2014/05/19/aware-makes-a-stand-against-female-circumcision-in-islam/>
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/taja.12070/abstract>
<http://www.expatsingapore.com/forum/index.php?topic=17015.0>
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/mmw/2013/02/a-tiny-cut-female-circumcision-in-southeast-asia/>
<http://www.mummysq.com/forums/f40/have-you-sunat-your-girls-29826/>
<http://rilek1corner.com/2014/05/19/aware-makes-a-stand-against-female-circumcision-in-islam/>
<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/girl-summit-tackling-fgm-held-london-001548629.html>
<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2014/03/21/Britain-to-prosecute-first-female-genital-mutilation-cases-.html>