

MENTAL ----- and ----- EMOTIONAL HEALTH EFFECTS ----- of ----- FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

Data from a 2010 study in
Northern Iraq



MENTAL DISORDERS

Girls who have undergone FGC are more prone to mental disorders. **46%** of the cut girls in the study met criteria indicating some sort of anxiety disorder.



PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING

Psychological suffering is lasting: 'All circumcised participants remembered the day of their circumcision as extremely frightening and traumatizing. Over 78% of the girls described feelings of intense fear, helplessness, horror, and severe pain, and over 74% were still suffering from intrusive re-experiences of their circumcision.'



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

The research carried out by Jan Ilhan Kizilhan, an expert in psychotraumatology at the University of Freiburg, suggests that girls who have undergone female genital cutting display a higher prevalence of post-traumatic stress.



SELF ESTEEM

Cut girls go on to experience lower self-esteem than is the norm for uncut girls of their age, and more symptoms of depression.



LASTING DISTRESS

The trauma and memory of being cut as well as the pain a cut woman may experience throughout her life, especially during sexual experiences and child birth, are also likely to result in further distress. Type 3 cutting (infib) involves literally reliving the initial trauma during intercourse and birth.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Wider support is needed for cut girls and women. The study provides a strong argument for investing in psychological support for girls and women who have undergone FGC. FGC's impact on women's mental wellbeing only makes the case stronger for an end to the practice.

