

2.0. Oral presentations: Maternal and neonatal care

Female genital mutilation remains high in Senegal: an analysis of DHS 2018

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Background:

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting or female circumcision, threatens the health and well-being of millions of girls, women and their children across the globe. In Senegal, despite numerous health interventions, female genital mutilation is still a harmful practice. The objective of this study is to conduct a descriptive and analytical analysis of female genital mutilation practices in Senegal in 2018.

Methods:

This study is a secondary analysis of the 2018 Senegal DHS. The analyses for this study were done on the Individual Records file. The DHS data covered 9414 women aged 15 to 49 years. A multivariate analysis was performed to consider confounding factors. The dependent variable was the existence of female genital mutilation in women. Data were analyzed with STATA 17 software.

Results:

The prevalence of FGM was 17.18%. Women who had flesh removed from genital area represented 60.96% (1338), 29.39% (252) had genital area just nicked without removing any flesh, 6.88% (151) had genital area sown closed. Women who thought that FGM was justified by religion represented 11.52%. However, 80.59% of the women thought that it was a practice that should be stopped. The protective factors for the occurrence of FGM were women's empowerment factors (high level of education of the woman (primary ajOR=0.64 [0.50-0.83] and secondary ajOR=0.43 [0.32, 0.57]) and the fact that the head of the household is a woman ajOR (0.75 [0.59-0.97]); belonging to the central region of Senegal and the Christian religion (ajOr=0.05 [0.02-0.13]). The risk factors for female genital mutilation in Senegal were ethnicity and belonging to certain regions in the northeast and southeast of Senegal.

Conclusions:

The prevalence of FGM in Senegal is still high. Ethnicity remains an important risk factor. Women's empowerment would allow the reduction of FGM. In the fight against FGM, politics should include women's autonomy strengthening like girls schooling.

Key messages:

- This study highlights the still significant extent of FGM.
- Women's empowerment factors would prevent these harmful traditional practices.