

Ethiopia

65.2%¹

Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM/C among women aged 15–49 is 65.2%.

Prevalence is decreasing, but the population is growing, resulting in an increase in the number of girls at risk.

Geography:

The regions with the highest prevalence are in the east²

Age:

Most cutting is performed before the age of 5, but about a fifth occurs between the ages of 5 and 9³

Type:

'Cut, flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM/C practised⁴

Agent:

Almost all FGM/C is carried out by traditional practitioners⁵

Development Indicators

SDG Gender Index Rating: 125 out of 144 countries, with a score of 49.8 (2022)⁶

Population: 122,145,944 (as at December 2022), with a 2.42% growth rate (2023 est.)⁷

Infant Mortality Rate: 39.1 per 1,000 births (2020)⁸

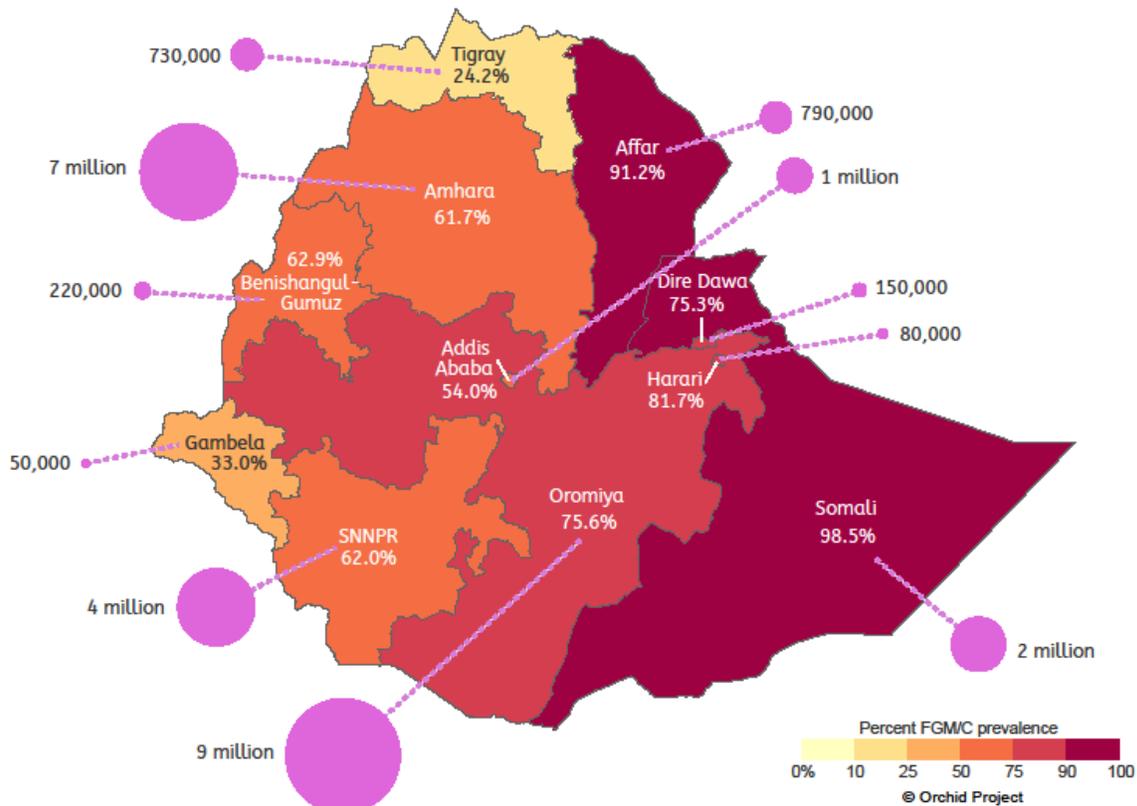
Maternal Mortality Ratio: 401 per 100,000 (2020)⁹

*'In our community, girls and women are discriminated against.
I learned that I have to show that I am equal to boys and I can do
whatever boys do.'*

*~ Tezerash Tesfa, whose mother refused
to have her undergo FGM/C¹⁰*

Prevalence

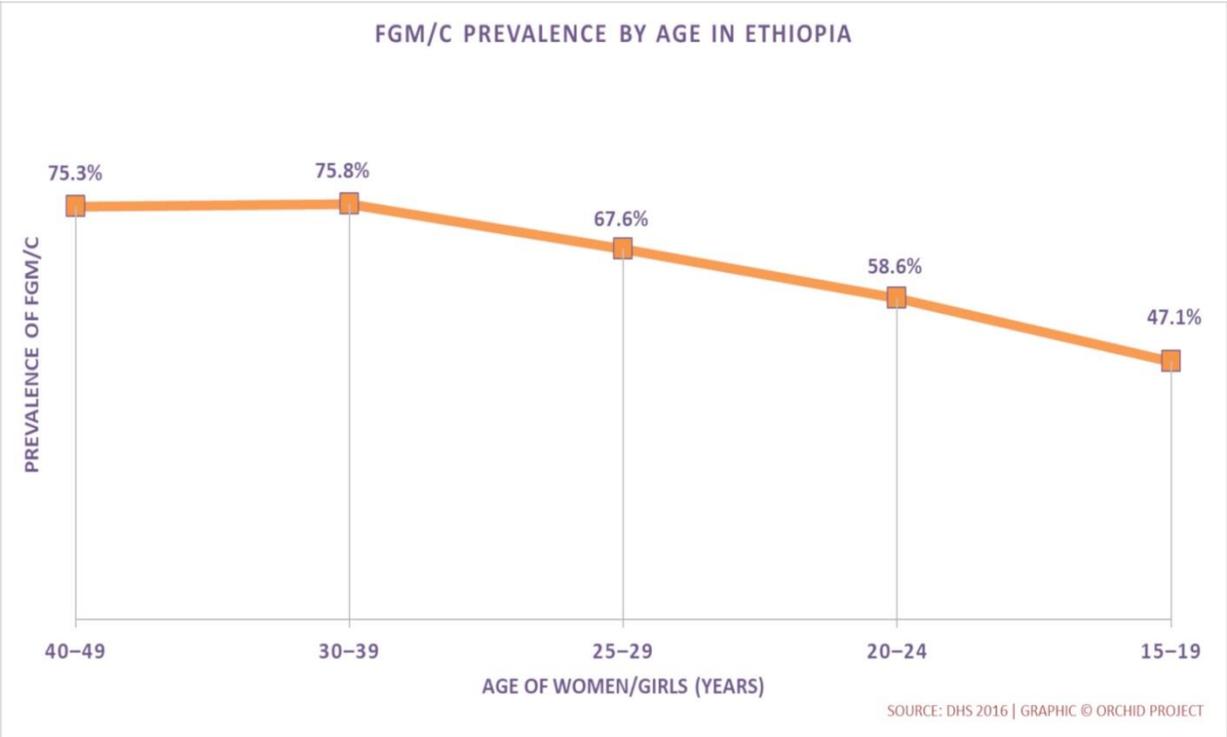
FGM/C is practised across all regions, religions and ethnic groups in Ethiopia. FGM/C among women aged 15–49 is more prevalent in the east of the country, and the region with the highest prevalence is Somali, at 98.5%. The lowest prevalence is in Tigray, at 24.2%. It should be noted that small sample sizes were used in many of the regions, and figures therefore may not be accurate. Women who live in rural areas are more likely to be cut (68.4% of women aged 15–49) than women who live in urban areas (53.9%).



The Somali are the ethnic group with the highest prevalence of FGM/C among women aged 15–49, at 98.5%, followed by the Affar at 98.4% (however, once again, the small sample size makes this figure potentially unreliable). The ethnic group with the lowest prevalence is the Tigray, at 23%.

82.2% of Muslim women aged 15-49 have undergone FGM/C, compared to 54.2% of Orthodox women and 65.8% of protestant women.¹¹

Between 2005 and 2016, the overall prevalence for women aged 15–49 fell from 74.3% to 65.2%. Due to the large age-range of women included, however, the overall prevalence alone may not fully reflect the progress that has been made in recent years. Breaking down the most recent data by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45–49 is 75.3%, while for the youngest age group this has fallen to 47.1%. Despite the fact that a small proportion of women may be cut after the age of 15, the lower prevalences among younger women suggest that the practice is declining.¹²



Ethiopian Law

FGM/C is illegal in Ethiopia. Articles 565 to 570 of The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2004) contain provisions against the practice.

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- 1 **(‘DHS’)**: Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF (2016) *Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016: Key Indicators Report*, p.321. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. CSA and ICF. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR328/FR328.pdf> (accessed 7 June 2017).
 - 2 DHS, p.45.
 - 3 DHS, pp. 322 & 323.
 - 4 DHS, p.45.
 - 5 DHS, p.325.
 - 6 Equal Measures 2030 (2022) *2022 Gender Index: Back to Normal is Not Good Enough*, p.19. Available at https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/SDG-index_report_FINAL_EN.pdf.
 - 7 - Country Meters (2022) *Ethiopia*, 5 December. Available at <https://countrymeters.info/en/Ethiopia>.
- Central Intelligence Agency (2023) ‘Ethiopia’, *The World Factbook*, 4 April. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/>.
 - 8 UNDP (2021) ‘Ethiopia’, *Human Development Reports*. Available at <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/ETH>.
 - 9 *Ibid.*
 - 10 Amy Yee (2017) ‘Talking it Out: The Effort to End Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia’, *UNDark*, 4 June. Available at <https://undark.org/article/ending-female-genital-mutilation-ethiopia-fgm/> (accessed 9 June 2017).
 - 11 DHS, p.45.
 - 12 DHS, p.45.

UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:

UNICEF (2013) *Ethiopia: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Ethiopia/FGMC_ETH.pdf (accessed 5 June 2017).

Webpage Image:

Jazzmany (2012) *HARAR, ETHIOPIA – DECEMBER 25, 2012 Unidentified young Muslim girl standing portrait in the streets of old city*. Shutterstock ID 195541997.