

# Ghana



2.4%<sup>1</sup>

## Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15–49 is 2.4%.  
94.4% of women aged 15–49 who have heard of FGM believe the practice should be stopped.<sup>2</sup>

### **Geography:**

The departments with the highest prevalence are Upper West (32.5%) and Upper East (13.0%); all other regions are below 3%<sup>3</sup>

### **Age:**

Girls usually undergo FGM before the age of 5<sup>4</sup>

### **Type:**

'Flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM practised<sup>5</sup>

### **Agent:**

84% of FGM cases are carried out by traditional practitioners called *wanzams*<sup>6</sup>

## Development Indicators

**HDI Rank:** 138 out of 189 countries (2019)<sup>7</sup>

**SDG Gender Index Rating:** 94 out of 129 countries (2019)<sup>8</sup>

**Population:** 31,732,128 with a 2.18% growth rate (2019 est.)<sup>9</sup>

**Infant Mortality Rate:** 34 deaths per 1,000 live births (2019)<sup>10</sup>

**Maternal Mortality Ratio:** 308 deaths per 100,000 live births (2019)<sup>11</sup>

**Literacy:** 76.6% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write<sup>12</sup>

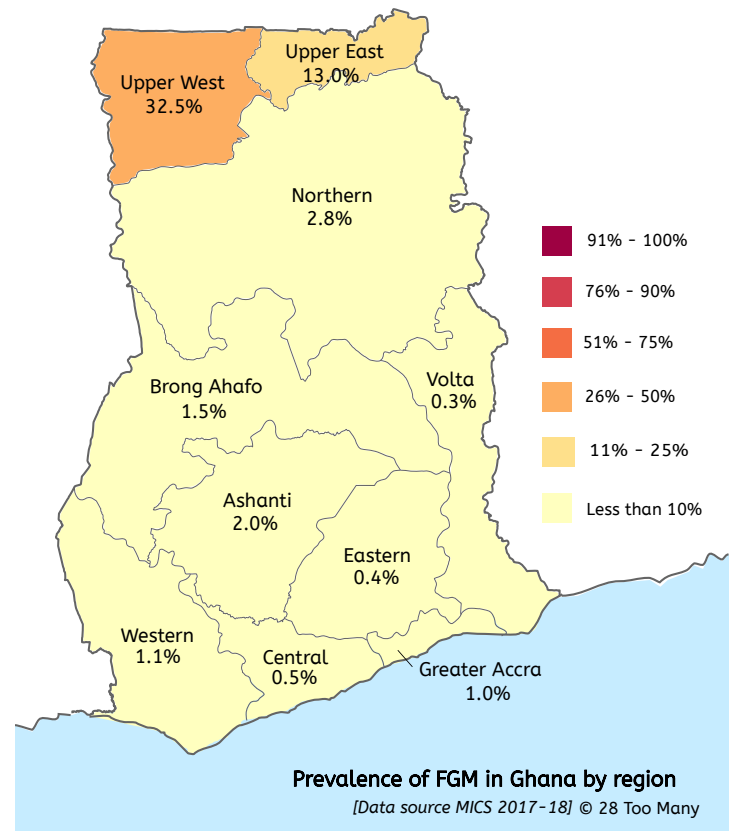
*'[T]hough FGM is not allowed, some people still hide and do it and many girls are still suffering from it because they are not reported, nobody hears of them and action is not taken.'*

*~ Child Protection Network, Ghana member<sup>13</sup>*

## Prevalence

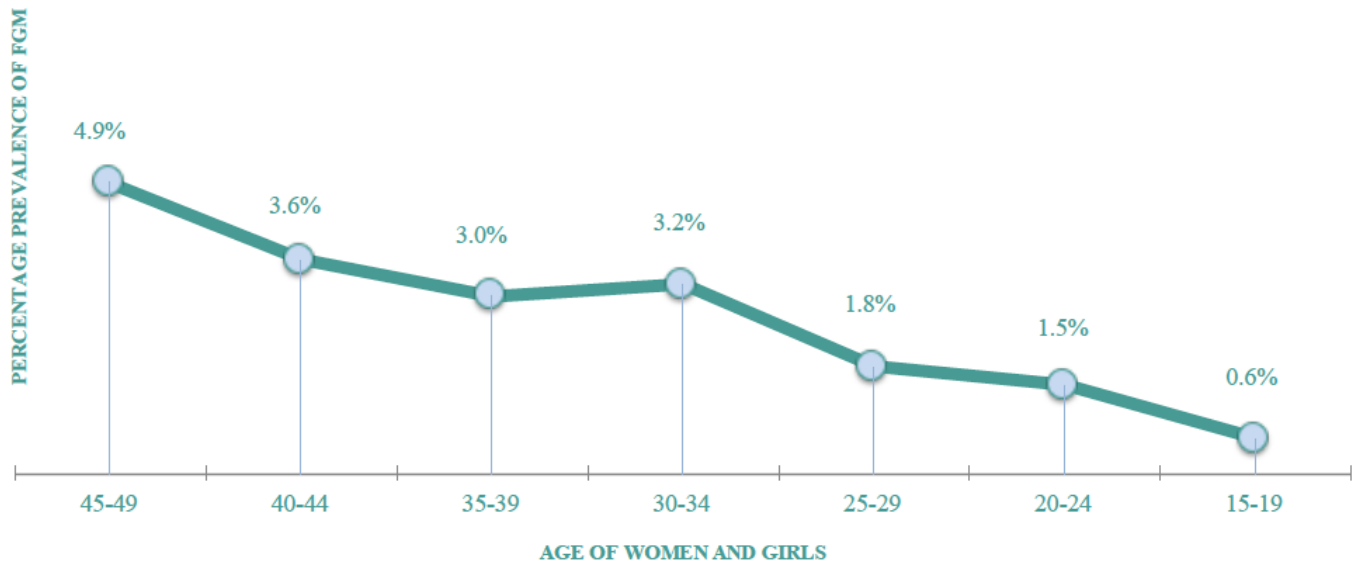
FGM is practised by several ethnic groups including the Kusasis, Frafras, Kassenas, Nankanis, Busangas, Wallas, Dagarbas, Builsas and Sisalas, who live mainly in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions of Ghana, and the migrant population in the south. As a result, the Upper East and Upper West have the highest prevalence of FGM, at 32.5% and 13.0% respectively (of women aged 15–49), and all other regions have a prevalence of less than 3%. The Volta region, along the east coast, has the lowest prevalence, at 0.3%. Women aged 15–49 who live in rural areas are more likely to undergo FGM (5.3%) than those living in urban areas (2.5%).

The prevalence of FGM is inversely correlated with level of education and wealth, and 94.2% of women aged 15–49 who have heard of FGM believe the practice should be stopped.<sup>14</sup>



Between 2011 and 2018, the overall prevalence for women aged 15–49 decreased from 3.8% to 2.4%. However, breaking down the most recent data by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45–49 is 6.4%, while for the youngest age group this has fallen to 1.5%. Despite the fact that a small number of women may be cut after the age of 15, the data suggests that there is a trend towards lower prevalences among younger women.<sup>15</sup>

## FGM PREVALENCE BY AGE IN GHANA



SOURCE: MICS 2017-18 | GRAPHIC © 28 TOO MANY

## Ghanaian Law

In 1994 the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act inserted Article 69A into the Criminal and Other Offences Act 1960 to prohibit 'female circumcision'. In 2007 this was further amended to 'female genital mutilation' and penalties were increased. There is limited information on prosecutions to date in Ghana.

- 1 Ghana Statistical Service (2017-18) *Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey with an Enhanced Malaria Module and Biomarker, 2017-18, Final Report*, pp.276-279. Accra, Ghana. Available at [https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS6/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Ghana/2017-2018/Survey%20findings/Ghana%202017-18%20MICS%20Survey%20Findings%20Report\\_English.pdf](https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS6/West%20and%20Central%20Africa/Ghana/2017-2018/Survey%20findings/Ghana%202017-18%20MICS%20Survey%20Findings%20Report_English.pdf) (accessed 26 April 2021).
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 UNICEF (2013) *Ghana: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, p.2. Available at [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country\\_profiles/Ghana/FGMC\\_GHA.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Ghana/FGMC_GHA.pdf) (accessed 20 June 2017).
- 5 Ghana Statistical Service (2017-18), *op. cit.*
- 6 UNICEF, *op. cit.*, p.2.
- 7 United Nations Development Programme (2019) *Human Development Reports*. Available at [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/GHA.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/GHA.pdf) (accessed 26 April 2021).
- 8 Equal Measures 2030 (2019) *Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index*, pp.12–13. Available at [www.data.em2030.org/2019-global-report](http://www.data.em2030.org/2019-global-report) (accessed 12 June 2019).
- 9 UNDP (2019), *op. cit.* p. 6
- 10 Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Ghana*. Available at [http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Ghana\\_2015.pdf](http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Ghana_2015.pdf) (accessed 20 June 2017).
- 11 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal mortality in 1990-2015: Ghana*. Available at [http://www.who.int/gho/maternal\\_health/countries/gha.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/gha.pdf?ua=1) (accessed 20 June 2017).
- 12 UNDP, *op. cit.*
- 13 Josephine Nyarkoh, GNA (2017) 'Ghana Receives International Applause for Reducing FGM Practice', *Ghana News Agency*, 30 January. Available at <http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/ghana-receives-international-applause-for-reducing-fgm-practice-112754> (accessed 21 August 2017).
- 14 Ghana Statistical Service (2017-18), *op. cit.*
- 15 - *Ibid.*  
- Ghana Statistical Service (2006) *Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Accra, Ghana*, p.102. Available at [http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR226/FR226\[MICS\].pdf](http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR226/FR226[MICS].pdf) (accessed 20 June 2017).

**UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:**

UNICEF (2013) *Ghana: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country\\_profiles/Ghana/FGMC\\_GHA.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Ghana/FGMC_GHA.pdf) (accessed 20 June 2017).

**Images on website:**

- 1 Anton Ivanov (2012) ACCRA, GHANA – MARCH 6, 2012: Unidentified Ghanaian beautiful sad girl in the street in Ghana. Children of Ghana suffer of poverty due to the unstable economic situation. Shutterstock ID 433784668.
- 2 Anton Ivanov (2017) BRONG AHAFO, GHANA – JAN 15, 2017: Unidentified Fulani woman in colored clothes and headscarf sits on the street with a little girl nearby in the local village. Fulanis are ethnic group of Ghana. Shutterstock ID 614952251.
- 3 Anton Ivanov (2017) GHANI, GHANA – JAN 14, 2017: Unidentified Ghanaian little girl is carried by her elder sister in the Ghani village. Ghana children suffer from poverty due to the bad economy. Shutterstock ID 615047153.