



FGM AWARE – NEWSLETTER 4 – MARCH 2017

Welcome to the FGM Aware newsletter which aims to bring together practitioners working to respond to FGM and FGM survivors and campaigners. We share information on research, resources and practice issues as well as promoting events and training opportunities.

We do not necessarily endorse the views of shared articles or websites and we are not responsible for the content of external links.

RESOURCES

Men Speak Out project. “Men have a role to play but they don’t play it”

Mixed methods study exploring men’s involvement in Female Genital Mutilation in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Preliminary results December 2016.

This report will be of use to anyone working with parents on child protection and risk assessment.

“More than 50% of the respondents indicated that they knew some of the consequences of FGM. Most of them said that it was only after arriving in Europe that they realized that the health problems their partners were experiencing were related to FGM.” Page 11

“Exploring communication between men and women on the practice of FGM was another major objective of this qualitative study. FGD participants were asked if they ever talked to the opposite sex about the practice and if they knew what their partner thought of it. With a few exceptions the initial reaction of the majority of participants across all three countries was that it was extremely difficult to talk about FGM with anyone. For most research participants the taboo around the practice was linked to codes of social decency and shame. In the Netherlands participants from Sierra Leone felt that FGM was not talked about because no member of an initiation group was allowed to reveal anything that happened in the bundu. Some suggested that there were ways to talk about taboo topics, like drama performances and songs. Although some men said that they could not speak to their wives directly about the practice, they had voiced their opinions about FGM in their presence so they were certain that their wives were aware of their views.” (Page 15).

“The research explored whether men are involved in the decision making process of FGM. In all countries the FGDs and interviews with men and women show that decisions on whether or not to cut a girl, when to cut, where to cut, who should cut, is mainly made by women. It emerged that the mother, the grandmothers and elder women wield the ultimate power. In Belgium and in the Netherlands women from West Africa said that girls could be taken away for cutting without the mother being informed. It was also reported that on occasion the mother’s wishes regarding the practice were ignored and even if a mother objected to her daughter being cut, older women such as grandmas, aunts and neighbours would have the girl cut. Most research participants agreed that men are traditionally less involved or uninvolved in decisions regarding FGM. The father is more often than not uninformed about the whole process. Most men

suggested that it was not their place to get involved in the practice, that it was women's business.” (Page 17)

“Across all three countries male and female research participants suggested that communication between men and women was crucial for an abandonment of FGM. On an interpersonal and private level, it is important that husband and wife speak to each other about the practice and discuss the decision not to have their daughters cut. As we have seen, however, it is not always easy for men and women to break the taboo. Some suggested that having access to adequate information would make the task easier and that many who supported the practice simply ‘did not know’“. Page 18

View or download the report here http://forwarduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MSO-Study_final.pdf

All you need to know about FGM

A short film from End FGM, 3 minutes 19 seconds, 2016

Dr Comfort Momoh describes the different types of FGM and possible health impacts.

Please note that the film uses line drawings to illustrate types but images may be upsetting to some.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN1mulqww5g

The girl who said no to FGM

The Guardian, 19 minutes, 2017

A short edit from The Guardian and Accidental Pictures' feature documentary 'Jaha's Promise', this film follows the journey of Jaha Dukureh from survivor of FGM and forced child marriage to Time's 100 leader and FGM activist.

Confronting her past, her family, her culture, her religion, country and its leaders, Jaha became a lightning-rod for change in Gambia.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAQldouaOLE

Multi-Agency guidance on Female Genital Mutilation.

The Scottish Government hopes to issue Scottish multi-agency guidance later this year, but in the meantime don't forget the useful information available in the guidance for England and Wales. Available to view or download at www.fgmaware.org/uploads/4/6/7/9/46792493/uk_gov_fgm_guidance_2016.pdf

MEDIA COVERAGE

Glasgow midwife treats 12 women a month affected by female genital mutilation

Evening Times report on work by Hilary Alba, Glasgow midwife.

www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/15146920.Glasgow_midwife_treats_12_women_a_month_affected_by_female_genital_mutilation/?ref=mrb&lp=5

One female genital mutilation case reported every hour

“A case of female genital mutilation is either discovered or treated at a medical appointment in England every hour, according to analysis of NHS statistics by a charity. Between April 2015 and March 2016 there were 8,656 times when women or girls attended doctors' surgeries or hospitals and the problem was assessed — the equivalent of one every 61 minutes. Among those who attended, a case of FGM is newly recorded every 92 minutes on average. This means a woman or girl has their case recorded by the NHS for the first time, although in many cases they will have been cut some years before but it has not come to the attention of doctors sooner”.

www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-case-per-hour-uk-nhs-circumcision-a7564571.html

INFORMATION SHARING

An article from Community InfoSource Violence against Women Project

Community InfoSource is a not-for-profit, Community Interest Company formed in Scotland in 2006. We are run by people from a refugee background and work with marginalised people including survivors of abuse, persecution, torture and trafficking.

Our Violence against Women Project works in partnership with men from communities affected by Female Genital Mutilation in Scotland to raise awareness about the practice. Social change is a process that affects the entire community; we work with men as they are influential partners in this practice and we support men to change their own attitudes and practices and influence others in their communities.

Our workshops and outreach work are designed to raise awareness that FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women, reflects inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of violence and discrimination against women. We are part of a small working group in Glasgow developing introductory level training on Child Protection aimed at community workers supporting BME communities and this will augment the awareness-raising work we carry out on child protection issues as part of combatting FGM.

We believe that it is important for men to be involved and take part in the process of combatting FGM in order to come up with lasting solutions. Our primary aim is to engage men in this process of preventing FGM by:

- Strengthening our links with communities affected by FGM and organisations working in this field
- Educating affected communities about the harmful health and social effects of FGM
- Signposting anyone with FGM survivors in his household to have proper medical care and counselling
- Raising awareness of the illegality of the practice, and the requirements of Human Rights legislation
- Encouraging people to start discussions and raise awareness of FGM issues with their families and friends

We recently organised a 'Zero Tolerance for FGM' event on the 14th of February 2017, attended by over 40 men from affected communities and 10 agencies working with these communities. The event was an opportunity to discuss the global dimension of Zero Tolerance of FGM, the importance of men becoming involved in combatting FGM and the role organisations can play in supporting communities affected by FGM. Film clips of men from a variety of backgrounds explaining their reasons for speaking out against FGM added a personal dimension to the day, as did the testimony of a young man who has become an active campaigner as a result of attending our workshops.

If you would like more information about the work of Community InfoSource, please contact Hassan Darasi on 0141 258 2773 or 07982938681 or email VAW@infosource.org.uk



Thanks to everyone who sent information for this newsletter. If you have any information for the next edition in June 2017 please email via www.fgmaware.org or jan@womenssupportproject.org.uk

FGM Aware is a Women's Support Project initiative

www.womenssupportproject.org.uk