# Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC): Appraising Media Coverage

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#### VMMC – in the eyes of the media

- Proven beyond reasonable doubt as scientifically viable method of HIV prevention
- † Widely accepted among communities that perform circumcision traditionally
- Safe and relatively cheap procedure
- Misconceptions and behavioural issues decreased risk perception
- Resistance by communities that do not traditionally circumcise
- ↓ Legal and ethical issues e.g. informed consent
- ↓ Political leadership and sustained commitment
- ↓ Safety and risk associated with procedure
- Dispute around the level of prevention
- Socio-economic factors surrounding the epidemic funding, pharmaceuticals, governance, etc

## Media coverage of VMMC - positive trend





was opened in Pietermarithing in 2000 together with the KIN Department of Health and has cir-curacised 8 500 men since it opened its doors. Director of Khula Mdoda circumcision clinic,

of BRY in men by 60%.
This is important for South Albien becomes of
the high BRY Infection rate. Medical male circum-cision below reduce the opened of HIV. The said,
circumcision centre in Opinion Farm in
medical circumcision centre in Opinion Farm in
2008 in partnership with Progressia Research, the
French Institute for Research. With University
University Division Despiration of the Control Person

100 pages 1 to through their daily routines with minimal dis

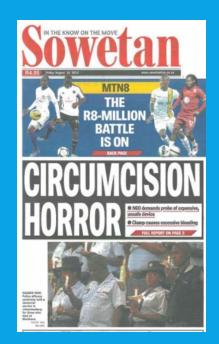
ppointment at Khala Ndoda call 4 SFH visit assungtuous.

Circumcision issue cuts two ways

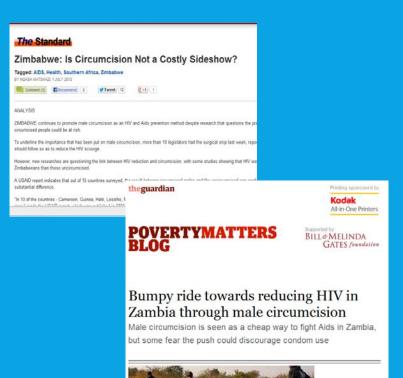
#### Media coverage of VMMC – positive trend

- Comprehensive
- Well researched and accurate
- Positive about VMMC as HIV prevention intervention
- Clear indication of MC as partial protection
- Emphasis on awareness of HIV status
- Through explanation of the benefits both for men and women

#### Media coverage of VMMC - negative trend







## Media coverage of VMMC – negative trend

- Misconception
- Bias
- Missed opportunities to frame MC in broader intervention aspects
- Omission of key messages

#### **BAD NEWS TRAVELS FURTHER FASTER!**

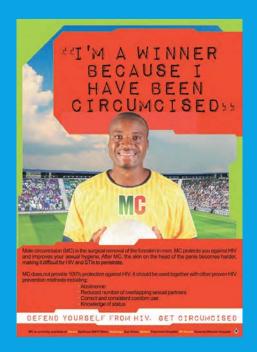
(WHO Study showed that articles with negative reporting had 2.9% repeat rate)

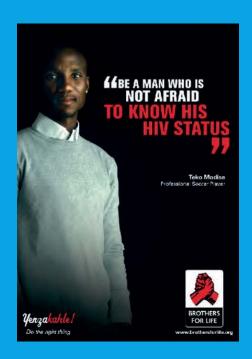
### Media coverage of VMMC – Broader HIV Reporting

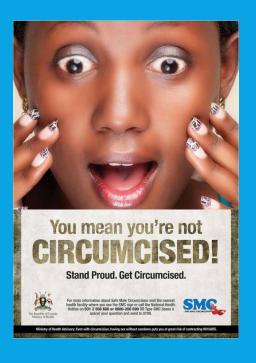
- Scientific and technical
- Political +economical + developmental
- Preachy and/or cautioning messaging
- Widely spread and emotionally distressing
- Social and cultural taboos
- Awkward extremely private issues gone public
- Lack of coordination among stakeholders in sensitising media
- HIV fatigue

#### Media coverage of VMMC – Game Changers

- Coordinated media /communication strategy as in programmes
- Active engagement of the media Proactive over reactive
- Mutually beneficial media partnership (minimise adhoc)
- Repackaging messaging (e.g. reconceptualising masculinity)
- New marketing strategies make even the most boring scientific concepts appealing
- Simplify information to encourage accuracy
- Work on misconceptions listen to public concern and respond
- Scale-up of social and behaviour change communication media can not do it alone







Thank you!