

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

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United Nations Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)  
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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

## Circumcision drive 'cuts down infection'

Ina Skosana

SINCE the HIV epidemic spread through sexual intercourse and targeted sexual health to stop new infections in the National Strategic Plan on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and TB 2012-2016, the government has listed medical male circumcision (MMC) as a priority when it comes to the prevention of new infections. Research has shown that circumcision drastically reduces risk of sexually transmitted infections (STI).

In his budget vote speech in April, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said 320 000 MMCs had been conducted between February 2010 and April this year. "While hundreds of thousands of men have already supported the government's free MMC offering, we need to take

it up in their millions," said Richard Delate from Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa, which is part of the Brothers for Life partnership.

Cultural practice associated with circumcision might deter some from exploring MMC.

However, Inkosi Mjoyezintombi Mzimela from the National House of Traditional Leaders said MMC was not in conflict with culture.

"People confuse circumcision with initiation school. Circumcision is just a part of the process. Culture is dynamic one cannot speak to one aspect of it without changes with time," he said.

Mzimela said that "So when we circumcised traditionally, we had the same purpose we need them to take

## Business to help tackle HIV-Aids

Business, VET, religious, education and other stakeholders met to discuss ways to support the roll-out of VMMC and other aspects of the HIV response.

Social partners: Delegates of the 5th Business Coalition conference on HIV Aids in Durban, where a five-year plan to help government fight the disease was unveiled.

FIGHTING STIGMA: Suburban CEO Brad Stearns speaks about business's role in preventing HIV Aids.

Business leaders' circumcision encouraged to help stem pandemic

Business leaders are encouraged to get circumcised to help stem the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The National House of Traditional Leaders said that business leaders should get circumcised to help stem the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

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## Circumcision helps fight HIV

By HAROLD NGCENO

MEN Go and join the thousands of other men and get circumcised in order to slow HIV infection.

The Society for Family Health, one of South Africa's non-profit HIV prevention organisations, has conducted over 8 000 circumcisions since it opened its doors in 2010.

Khula Nodda - a male circumcision clinic at Chris Barni (Ragunanzhi) hospital - has done over 10 000 circumcisions since its formation in 2009.

But as the fight against the spread of HIV goes on, more men are encouraged to become part of the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision programme for this year.

The family health society's country director, Scott Riley, said voluntary circumcisions has become popular as an HIV intervention after various controlled trials in South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya showed that circumcisions could reduce the risk of HIV in men by 60%.

"This is important for South Africa because of the high HIV infection rate. Medical male circumcision helps reduce the spread of HIV," he said.

The health society started operating its first medical circumcision centre in Orange Farm in 2008 in partnership with Progression Research, the French Institute for Research, Wits University (University Department), the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and Treatment Agency (NICD) and the South African National AIDS Commission (SANAC).

Director of Khula Nodda centre at Sara hospital, Dr Linaketeo Lelana, tells us.

Another society voluntary circumcision centre was opened in Pietermaritzburg in 2010 together with the EKN Department of Health and has circumcised 8 500 men since it opened its doors.

Director of Khula Nodda circumcision clinic, Linaketeo Lelana, said: "It is a minor medical procedure which is done under local anaesthetic - a painkiller - while the patient is awake. They can go through their daily routines with minimal discomfort," she said.

Thabo Swanezi, who has been through the process, has this to say: "I was very scared initially but it was not as painful as I expected. Recovery was very quick and I am happy with the result," he said.

Appointment at Khula Nodda call 011 835 8358 or visit [www.sfh.org.za](http://www.sfh.org.za).

## Scaling Up Circumcision

Services Seen to Cut Long-Term Costs in Zambia

The Public Health Service in Zambia has seen a significant increase in the number of men who have been circumcised since the start of the national voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) campaign in 2010. The campaign has been successful in reaching a large number of men, particularly in rural areas where the prevalence of HIV is high.

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## Circumcision issue cuts two ways

Comment & Analysis

By HAROLD NGCENO

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## 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

IN THE KNOW ON THE MOVE

# Sowetan

R4.00 Friday August 24, 2012 www.sowetan.co.za

**MTN8**  
THE R8-MILLION BATTLE IS ON  
BACK PAGE

## CIRCUMCISION HORROR

- NDD demands probe of expensive, unsafe device
- Clamp causes excessive bleeding

FULL REPORT ON PAGE 2

**SHAME ON!** Police officers performing a clamp circumcision on a boy who died in Mankwato

PHOTO: AGS

NEW ARRIVAL

# To CUT or not to cut?

Deciding whether to have your new-born son circumcised depends on your beliefs as parents. Read about the risks and benefits before making the crucial choice.

**D**uring circumcision, the foreskin, which is the skin that covers the tip of the penis, is removed. Circumcision is usually performed on the first or second day after birth. The procedure takes five to 15 minutes.

Paediatric general practitioner Dr Ian Thompson says that if you're having a son, you will be confronted with the decision on circumcision after birth. He adds that circumcision is a personal decision that parents need to make based on their own beliefs.

**WEIGH THE ADVANTAGES**

There are strong benefits for circumcisions performed sooner rather than later:

- **Phimosis:** Phimosis means that the foreskin is too tight to be pulled back over the head of the penis. If it's pulled back and then not pulled forward again, the head of the penis may swell and become very painful. Many boys cannot move the foreskin all the way back until they reach 10 years of age or older. So between that time, your son won't be able to clean the foreskin properly, which may lead to infections. Some studies also suggest that uncircumcised boys are more likely to get urinary tract infections. So if your boy is uncircumcised at birth, it also prevents kidney infections.
- **Later circumcisions are more complex and risky:** Once the child is older, the operation is much more involved. It often requires a general anaesthetic which might have risks, and the risk of complications generally seen is up to five percent of operations. It is approximately 10 times longer for

circumcision in older boys and adults, compared to infants.

- **Healing is slower:** as children or teens, adhesions to substance used for sticking skin together are needed, and a new visible scar may result.

**CONSIDER THE RISKS**

Like any surgical procedure, circumcision has some risks. The rate of problems after infant circumcision is low. Bleeding and infection in the circumcised area are the most common problems. Sometimes the newly exposed skin becomes irritated by the pressure of nappies and ammonia in the urine. The irritation is usually treated with petroleum jelly (Vaseline) applied liberally on the area. This problem usually resolves after a few days.

**WHEN DID I CARE FOR MY BABY'S PENIS AFTER A CIRCUMCISION?**

Clearly clean the area with water every day and whenever the nappy area becomes soiled. Some swelling of the penis is normal after a circumcision. A clear crust will probably form over the area. It normally takes seven to 10 days for the penis to heal.

After the circumcision, you may notice a bit of blood on the baby's nappy. If the bloodstain is larger than the size of a 50-cent coin, call your doctor. If there is a lump on the penis, the lump should be changed each time you change your son's nappy. This will help prevent infection.

**When to call your doctor**

- If the wound does not stop bleeding.
- If your son does not have a wet nappy within six to eight hours

after the circumcision.

- If the redness and swelling around the tip of the penis do not go away, or get worse after three to five days.
- If there is a yellow discharge or swelling around the tip of the penis after seven days.

**FAST FACTS**

- The most common complication to male circumcision is an infection.
- The risk of infection is 0.25 percent.
- The risk of bleeding is 0.1 percent.
- The risk of death is 0.0001 percent.
- For every 100 circumcisions performed, one life is saved in prevention.

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**The Standard**

## Zimbabwe: Is Circumcision Not a Costly Sideshow?

Tagged: AIDS, Health, Southern Africa, Zimbabwe

BY NKABU MATSHAZI, 1 JULY 2012

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ANALYSIS

ZIMBABWE continues to promote male circumcision as an HIV and Aids prevention method despite research that questions the pro-circumcised people could be at risk.

To underline the importance that has been put on male circumcision, more than 10 legislators had the surgical snip last week, reports should follow so as to reduce the HIV scourge.

However, new researches are questioning the link between HIV reduction and circumcision, with some studies showing that HIV was Zimbabweans than those uncircumcised.

A USAID report indicates that out of 15 countries surveyed, there was a substantial difference.

theguardian

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In 10 of the countries – Cameroon, Guinea, Haiti, Lesotho, I

## POVERTYMATTERS BLOG

### Bumpy ride towards reducing HIV in Zambia through male circumcision

Male circumcision is seen as a cheap way to fight Aids in Zambia, but some fear the push could discourage condom use



## 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

“I'M A WINNER BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN CIRCUMCISED”

Male circumcision (MC) is the surgical removal of the foreskin in men. MC protects you against HIV and improves your sexual hygiene. After MC, the skin on the head of the penis becomes harder, making it difficult for HIV and G16 to penetrate.

MC does not provide 100% protection against HIV. It should be used together with other proven HIV prevention methods including:

- Abstinence
- Reduced number of overlapping sexual partners
- Correct and consistent condom use
- Knowledge of status

**DEFEND YOURSELF FROM HIV. GET CIRCUMCISED**

MC is currently available at: Netcare SMT Clinics, Sekakeyale Eye Clinic, Netcare Professional Hospital, Mt Shani, Netcare Mission Hospital

“BE A MAN WHO IS NOT AFRAID TO KNOW HIS HIV STATUS”

Teko Modise  
Professional Soccer Player

*Venzakahle!*  
Do the right thing

**BROTHERS FOR LIFE**

[www.brothersforlife.org](http://www.brothersforlife.org)

**You mean you're not CIRCUMCISED!**

Stand Proud. Get Circumcised.

The Republic of South Africa  
Ministry of Health

For more information about Safe Male Circumcision visit the nearest health facility where you can see the SMC logo or call the National Health Hotline on 031 2 500 600 or 0800-200 600 OR Type SMC (leave a space) your question and send to 8190.

[www.smc.org.za](http://www.smc.org.za)

Ministry of Health Advisory: Even with circumcision, having sex without condoms puts you at great risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Thank you!