

## **Male Circumcision Radio**

### **Call-in Show Guide**



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

### **National Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision Programme**

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#### **Background facts to be shared with presenter**

Zambia began providing Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) services as a method of HIV prevention in 2007 in conjunction with the joint announcement by the WHO and UNAIDS that VMMC should be included as part of comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment programs. To date, three randomized clinical trials in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda have shown that VMMC can reduce female-to-male transmission of HIV through heterosexual intercourse by roughly 60%.

Given these strong clinical results, Zambia has set an ambitious target of scaling VMMC programs to reach 80% of HIV-negative uncircumcised men 15-49 years by 2015. This will require 1.86 million circumcisions over 2012-2015. Research suggests that this would avert an estimated 339,632 HIV infections (29.9%) for a net savings of US\$1.7 billion (2011-2025).

To date, the Ministry of Health has completed over 200,000 MCs with the support of cooperating partners such as CDC, SFH, JHPIEGO, MSI, and ZPCTII.

#### **Campaign for VMMC scale-up**

This Ministry of Health has announced a national VMMC campaign to increase scale-up which will run from December 1<sup>st</sup> -31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. During this period, additional resources will be dedicated to providing VMMC services and generating demand.

#### *Involvement of local radio*

In support of this effort, the Ministry of Health, with the support of cooperating partners, will be working through the Provincial Medical Offices to schedule VMMC panel discussions on local radio stations. This document and the attached question guide are meant to provide a basis for these panel discussions. It is expected that each PMO will coordinate with supporting partners in their area to:

- Confirm time on local radio. Note that airtime and contracts with local radio stations will be made directly with Communications Support for Health.

- Select the questions and responses that are most relevant in their communities (not all questions or responses need to be addressed for each show).
- Select panel members for the discussion with the following criteria in mind:
  - A trained provider
  - A satisfied client
  - A partner representative
  - A local advocate who is an opinion leader (e.g. MP, DC, traditional leader, religious leader)

Please direct any questions relating to these materials or the August campaign to:

**Dr. Daniel Makawa,**  
**National Male Circumcision Coordinator, MoH**  
[makawad@yahoo.com](mailto:makawad@yahoo.com)  
**0977100044**

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**Host /Presenter:**

Introduction- provides background information and campaign details as described above. This should be done before questions begin.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INVITED GUESTS:**

***Understanding Male Circumcision: These questions explain what male circumcision is and what health benefits it provides for men and their female partners.***

Q: “What is male circumcision?”

A: Male circumcision is the removal of the foreskin, the tissue covering the head of the penis.

Q: “Could you please explain for our listeners why the Government of Zambia has decided to begin promoting male circumcision?”

A: The Ministry of Health had decided to scale-up male circumcision services because of the proven health benefits. Voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC):

1. Reduces the risk of female to male transmission of HIV by 60%;
2. Reduces the risk of getting and passing on the virus that causes cervical cancer in women;
3. Reduces the risk of being infected with some sexually transmitted infections;
4. Reduces the likelihood of urinary tract infections in young boys;
5. And MC can make it easier for a man to clean and maintain good hygiene of the penis.

***General description of Male Circumcision, counseling and testing process.***

Q: “For those people listening who have not gone yet for male circumcision, could you describe exactly what is involved? What should they expect when they go for MC?”

A: (multiple answers)

1. Medical Circumcision is safe and is done numbing the penis, meaning you will be awake during the procedure.
2. The procedure itself takes roughly 30 minutes, however it is provided as part of a complete package which includes the following services, when you arrive at the facility:
  - a. You will be assessed by a trained health worker.
  - b. You will be counseled and be offered voluntary HIV testing.
  - c. You will be counseled on the surgery, and how to care for the wound afterwards.
3. MC is a surgical procedure, and as such may result in certain complications such as bleeding, swelling, and/or some pain during the healing process.
4. There is a small chance of more serious complications, especially if the MC provider is not a trained health care worker, or if wound care instructions are not followed. Speak to your provider about these risks before you undergo the procedure.

### ***Importance of post-male circumcision behaviours (ABC etc.)***

Q: “What would you tell to a young man who thinks that once he has been circumcised, he will not need to use condoms anymore?”

A: (multiple answers)

1. MC does not provide 100% protection from HIV and other STIs; a circumcised man can still get HIV and other STIs.
2. Due to increased likelihood of bleeding during the healing period, the risk of HIV transmission is increased for those 6 weeks. This is why you must abstain from sex and masturbation during the 6-week healing period
3. Use condoms correctly and consistently with every sexual partner after the 6-week healing period.

### ***Describe the healing and recovery process (wound care)***

Q: “Many people wonder, how long is the recovery period, and when can one go back to work or school?”

1. Clients undergoing MC should plan to rest for one or two days after the procedure and should avoid highly physical activity for up to seven days after the procedure to promote proper wound healing.
2. Clients undergoing MC should carefully follow the instructions of their health care provider regarding wound washing and wound care to avoid unnecessary complications.
3. Clients undergoing MC must avoid all sexual activity and masturbation for at least six weeks after the procedure to allow for proper wound healing and to avoid increased risk of wound infection.

### ***Addressing concerns about pain and potential risks.***

“Surely there are some men out there who are afraid of the pain. What would you tell someone listening who may be afraid of going for male circumcision because they are worried about the pain?”

1. There will be some pain and this pain that may result from the procedure will be addressed by pain killers provided by the provider. Medicines to relieve pain will be provided before, during and after the procedure.

### ***Addressing common questions and myths.***

“We know that male circumcision is a new thing for most people in Zambia. As you talk to people in the community about this topic, what are some of the common questions or common myths that you are hearing from people out there?”

1. [Address the common myths in your area]

### ***Describe who is eligible and the reasons.***

Q: “Can anyone go for MC?” “What about people who are living with the HIV virus, are they also able to get this service?”

1. There are a few rare physical conditions that prevent a man from going for medical circumcision. However, these will be addressed during the assessment and appropriate treatment will be recommended.
2. HIV positive men are still eligible for male circumcision, there are many additional health benefits of MC which HIV positive men may take advantage of. However, it should be noted that circumcision DOES NOT reduce the likelihood of an HIV positive man passing on the virus.

Q: “What is the right age to go for male circumcision?”

1. Circumcision is beneficial for men of all ages, however, the procedure is simplified for boys and men over the age of 7 years. Over the age of 7 years, only local anaesthesia is required which allows for the service to be provided safely at even rural health facilities.
2. For boys aged less than 18, written or documented parental or guardian consent is required.

### ***Female involvement***

Q: What role can women play in this campaign?

1. Women have significant influence on the decisions of both their partners and their children to undergo male circumcision.
2. Because of this, it is extremely important that women are aware of the health benefits to men as well as the reduced risk of cervical cancer for themselves.
3. Women whose partners undergo circumcision also need to be aware of proper wound care and the importance of the healing period. This is to ensure that they do not put themselves at risk and that their partners do not suffer from unnecessary complications.

### ***Direct the public to access MC services.***

“If someone wanted to go for male circumcision today, right now, where can they go?”

1. [Please list ALL facilities from ALL partners and MOH sites which offer MC in your area]

### **Closing**

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