

Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) Training Kit

Facilitators Guide

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The foreskin model is covered by **Patent registration No: 2012/083534**

“Definitely the best model I have seen for demonstrating and explaining medical male circumcision and its benefits.”

Dr Dirk Taljaard, Chief Executive Officer, CHAPS

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Objectives

- To demonstrate and clarify what medical male circumcision involves
- To explain the key benefits of medical male circumcision
- To clarify how male circumcision can reduce but not eliminate the risk of sexual transmission of HIV
- (optional): For medical staff to practice surgical medical male circumcision procedures

Time required: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation

- Find out where Medical Male Circumcision is offered in the area where your participants live.
- Make photocopies of the handout on pages 5-6 to give participants (optional).
- Practice demonstrating using the model

How to run this activity

Writing like this are instructions and information for facilitating this activity.

Writing in italic like this are ideas for what you could actually say to participants, though it is best to put it in your own words.

Step 1. What do we know and think about circumcision?

Ask participants in turn to share one thing they each know or have heard or think about circumcision – either technical information or to do with the tradition of circumcision and cultural beliefs about it. Note what issues come up, and address them through the session activities or facilitated discussion.

Step 2. Explain using the model that the risk of HIV infection during sex is higher for an uncircumcised man

Show participants the model with the foreskin covering the glans (the head) of the penis (see Fig 1). Explain that this is an uncircumcised penis.

Explain that:

During sex the foreskin is pulled back (retracted) like this.



Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Gradually pull back the foreskin (see Fig 2) so that the glans is not covered at all, and the pink area of the foreskin (the inner foreskin) is exposed (see Fig 3).

Explain:

The inner foreskin (the pink area) is more sensitive and open to HIV infection. The inner foreskin also has a lot of cells (called Langerhans cells) which HIV can easily infect.

If a man has unprotected sex (without a condom) with a woman living with HIV, the inner foreskin is exposed to rubbing and HIV in the vaginal fluid. This creates a significant risk of HIV infection. (Unprotected anal sex with someone living with HIV also has a significant risk of infection.)

If the foreskin is removed, this reduces the risk of HIV infection by about 60% - this is a lot, but not 100%, as there are still areas on the penis where HIV can enter, and other methods of HIV prevention like condoms are still vital.

Step 3. Explain and demonstrate what VMMC involves

Pull / roll the foreskin back over the glans of the penis, so it looks like Fig 1.

Explain:

Medical Male Circumcision can be done surgically under local anesthetic which takes about 20 minutes from start to finish. It involves cutting the foreskin at a point just behind the glans of the penis, and removing the foreskin.

There are some alternative non-surgical procedures available such as PrePex. This involves placing a device which restricts the blood flow to the foreskin, and then removing it and the dried out (necrotized) foreskin a week later.

Indicate on the model where the cut is made.

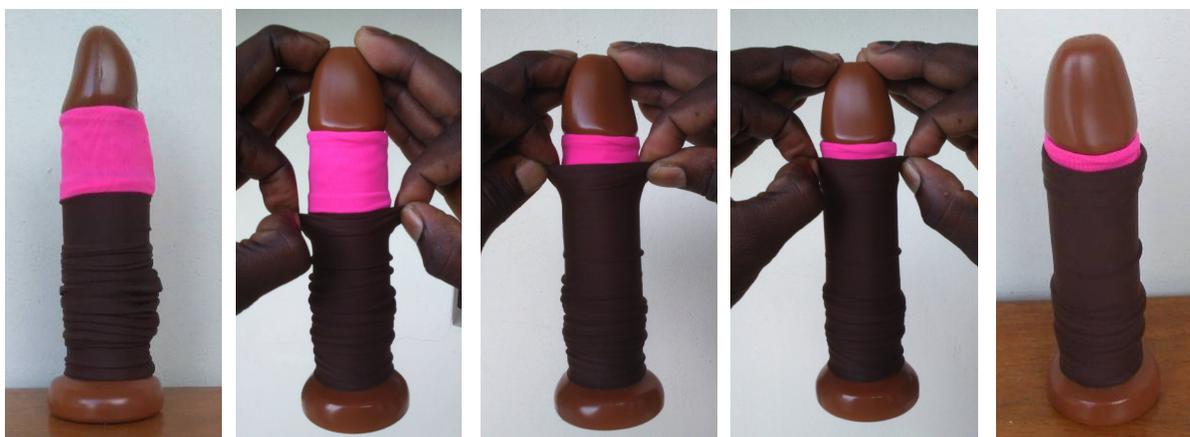


Fig 3
Retracted,
not circumcised

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7:
Circumcised

Retract the foreskin so it looks like Fig 3. Then adjust the fabric foreskin as shown in Figs 4, 5, and 6, so it looks like Fig 7, with a little of the pink inner foreskin still exposed. Explain that:

This is now circumcised. Although the risk of HIV infection is much reduced by VMMC, some of the skin sensitive to HIV infection is still exposed, and there is still some risk of HIV infection. Other methods of prevention like condoms are still vital.

Step 4. Clarify the need to abstain for 6 weeks after circumcision, using the story of the football player

Either read this story, or tell it in your own words and language.

Two football players were both injured in a match one day.

One of them was very impatient, and before his wound was fully healed, he claimed to be better and insisted on playing in the next match. He could not play well for his team and was injured again and taken off.

The other football player waited the full 6 weeks needed for his wound to recover completely before he played another match. He was 100% fit again, played brilliantly and scored the winning goal.

Ask participants what this story means in terms of male circumcision. If the answer does not come out clearly, clarify that it is important to wait for 6 weeks after circumcision before having sex again.

Step 5. Benefits and risks

Ask participants what they think are the benefits and risks of circumcision. Then clarify that, as well as reducing the risk of HIV infection, other benefits are:

- It is easier to wash your penis
- It makes you less likely to get syphilis, herpes and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- It reduces your risk of getting cancer of the penis
- Your female sexual partner is less likely to develop cervical cancer.

The risks are the pain and the frustration of having to abstain from sex for 6 weeks after the operation. The operation itself, if carried out properly in medical conditions, is simple and safe, with minimal risks.

Step 6. Establish where someone can get VMMC in the communities your participants are from

Ask participants where someone could go to get medical male circumcision in their communities. Inform them if they do not know, and the cost of the service. (It is free on many government and other sponsored programmes.)

Step 7. Conclude and give hand-outs

Ask if there are any questions. Confirm the Key Learning points below.

If you have made copies of the handout on pages 5-6 on *Male Circumcision and HIV*, give these to participants.

Key learning points

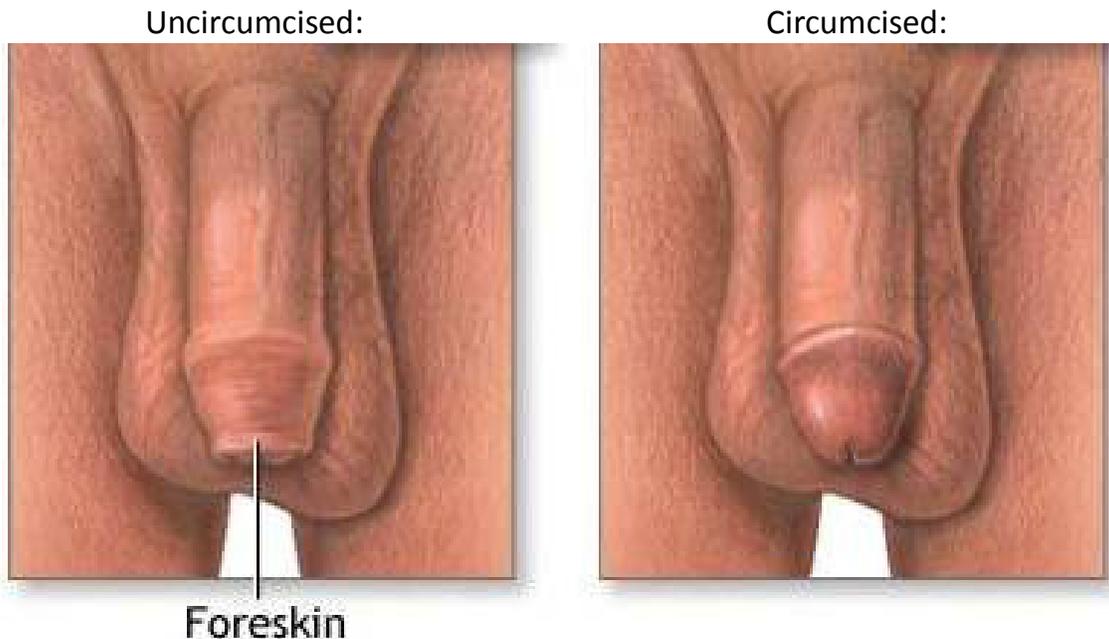
- Full male circumcision reduces the risk of the man contracting HIV by about 60%. This is achieved most reliably and safely by proper Medical Male Circumcision.
- Medical Male Circumcision greatly reduces the risk of HIV infection, but other forms of protection like condoms are still vital.

Handout

Male Circumcision and HIV

What is Male Circumcision?

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



How does male circumcision help prevent HIV transmission?

Various studies in different countries have proven conclusively that, when an uncircumcised man has sex with a woman who is living with HIV, he is at a much greater risk of becoming infected with HIV than a man who is circumcised. The HIV infection rate was about 60 percent less in circumcised men.

There are several possible reasons why circumcision offers protection against HIV infection:

- the inner surface of the foreskin has a very high concentration of cells containing HIV receptors that act as a way into the body when exposed to HIV-infected bodily fluids such as vaginal fluid.
- the foreskin traps HIV in a moist environment near the surface of the penis, allowing the HIV to live longer
- small foreskin tears that may occur during intercourse provide a way in for the virus.

Does male circumcision provide total protection from HIV infection?

No it does not. Whether circumcised or not, men are at risk of exposure to HIV infection during sex. Male circumcision is just part of the approach to prevention that includes abstinence, be faithful and correct use of condoms.

How is male circumcision done?

During surgical circumcision, a cut is made through the base of the foreskin around the head of the penis (the glans), and the foreskin removed. It is normally done under local anaesthetic.

Non-surgical procedures such as PrePex can also be used. This uses a ring to stop blood flow into the foreskin, so that it dries out and can be removed a week later.

Safety

Circumcision should be done in health facilities with appropriately trained providers, adequate medical supplies and in clean conditions. Do not try it yourself!

At what age should I be circumcised?

The procedure can be done on boys and men of any age.

Circumcision is widely practiced for religious and traditional reasons, often within the first two weeks after birth or at the beginning of adolescence as a rite of passage into manhood.

For circumcision it to be most effective as an HIV prevention tool, it should ideally be done before one becomes sexually active.

Healing period

Newly circumcised males should abstain from sex for six weeks to ensure the penis is fully healed. During this period, if the cut from the operation is not fully healed, there could be an increased risk of infection.

Does circumcision make sex better or worse?

Some women and some men say they enjoy sex more with a circumcised penis. Others say that it does not make a difference to sexual pleasure.

Can females get circumcised?

Female circumcision or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a harmful traditional practice common in a few communities. It has no health benefits.



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