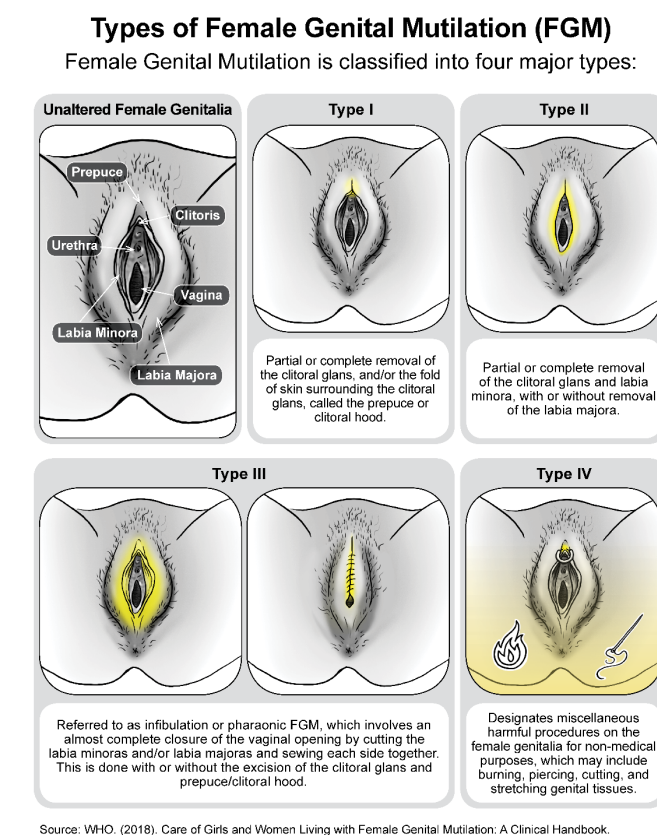


Economic Analysis of Female Genital Mutilation in the United States: Tangible and Intangible Costs

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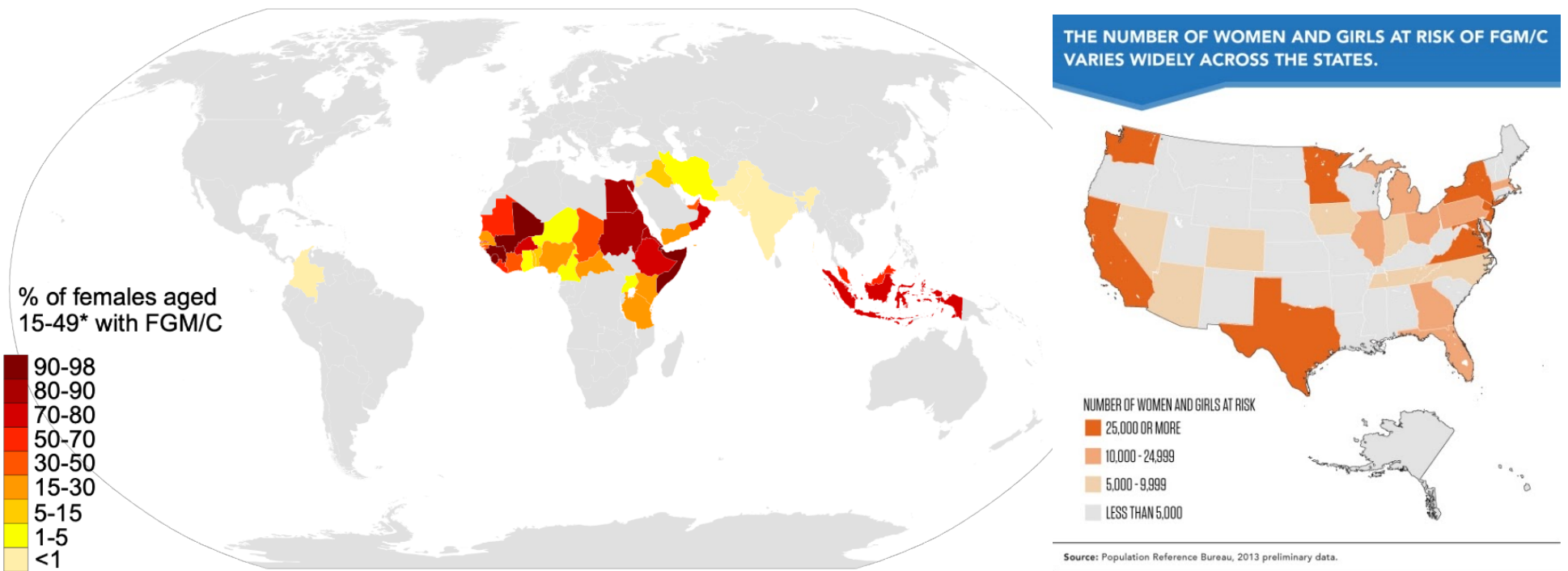
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Background



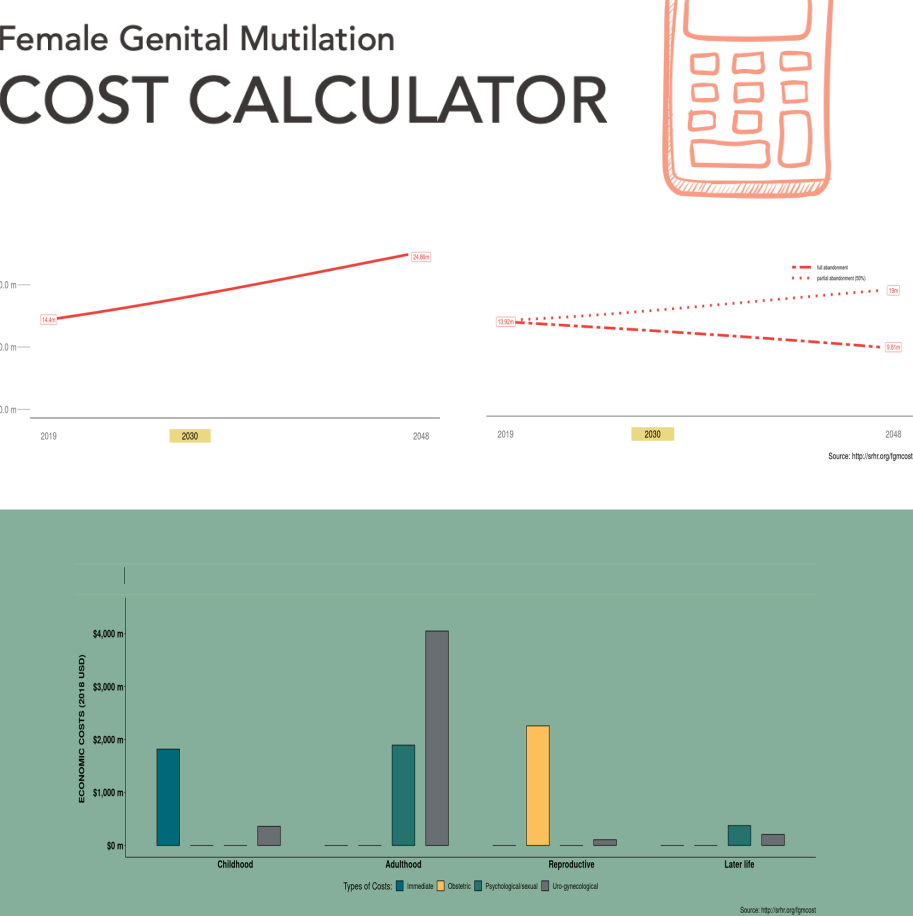
- FGM is defined as “partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”¹
- Over 200 million women affected worldwide
- Can result in acute and long-term complications negatively affecting female genital function and overall quality of life
- Chappell et al recently performed the first systematic scoping review on FGM, considering the physical and mental health related morbidity²

Fig. 1: Females with and at Risk of FGM



Demographic data showing prevalence of FGM/C in regions internationally and nationally.

Methods: WHO’s FGM Cost Calculator⁵



<https://srhr.org/fgmcost/cost-calculator/>

- Fails to directly address intangible costs

The Practice and Prevalence of FGM in the U.S.

- Girls in the U.S. are at highest risk if they are from a country and particular community where FGM is most prevalent
- Differing opinions on the practice of FGM: important to maintain first-generation child’s identity, “bulwark against Western influence”, opposed to practice but pressure from relatives, etc.³
- “Vacation cutting”: immigrants, permanent residents and U.S. citizens sent abroad to undergo mutilation/cutting
- FGM Legislation
 - 1996: U.S. Congress passed legislation criminalizing the practice of FGM within the U.S.
 - Only 4 states have laws strict enough to criminalize “vacation cutting” (FL, GA, LA, NV)
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that FGM is however still performed illegally in the U.S.
- Women estimated to be at risk of FGM in the U.S. as of 2012:
 - U.S.: 513,000⁴
 - IL: > 6,400 (2000 data)

Aims of the Economic Analysis

- Primary aim:
 1. Determine the tangible and intangible costs to victims of FGM per person as well as to a healthcare system at large within the United States
- Secondary aims:
 2. Bring attention to the economic burden of FGM within the United States
 3. Inform policymakers and public health experts regarding the importance of robust and expanded legislation
 4. Address, minimize, and abandon the practice of FGM in the United States

Medical Complications and Tangible/Intangible Costs³

Medical Complications	
Short-term	Pain, hemorrhage, shock
	Difficulty in urination and defecation
	Infections including tetanus and sepsis
Long-term	Chronic pain, dermoid cysts, abscesses, keloids
	PID, UTIs, STIs
	Slow and painful menstruation/urination, hematocolpos
	Increased risk of HIV transmission (2/2 to ↑ risk of genital herpes and ↑ risk of bleeding during intercourse)
	C-section, episiotomy

Tangible/Intangible Costs	
Tangible	Medical Costs
	Loss of productivity
	Morbidity/mortality 2/2 physical and mental health outcomes
Intangible	The immeasurable psychological pain and suffering itself that these individuals face in the setting of stigmatization, trauma and external mutilation



Next Steps

- Prevalence data per medical complications and unit costs per treatment of each medical complication
- Unit costs multiplied by “quantity of healthcare resources required to treat and manage complications of FGM” (WHO)
- Additional tangible costs estimated utilizing similar models (economic analyses of loss of productivity in sexual violence⁶)
- Intangible costs based on sexual violence models and qualitative analyses
- Aggregate costs per state and nationally (adjusted for inflation)

Limitations

- Identifying prevalence of an underreported practice
- Reporting prevalence in populations that immigrate to the U.S.
 - Estimating prevalence in immigrants from populations with unknown prevalence data (Indonesia, India)
- Determining costs of specific health complications without direct surgical interventions
- Estimating the intangible costs of trauma and psychological harm

References

¹Classification of female genital mutilation, Geneva: World Health Organization, 2014
²Chappell et al. “Morbidity due to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): A Scoping Review.” *In review*. 2020.
³Sanctuary for Families. “Female Genital Mutilation in the United States: Protecting Girls and Women in the U.S. from FGM and Vacation Cutting.” 2013. <<https://www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2015/07/FGM-Report-March-2013.pdf>>
⁴Goldberg, Howard et al. “Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in the United States: Updated Estimates of Women and Girls at Risk, 2012.” *Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974)* vol. 131,2 (2016): 340-7.
⁵World Health Organization, Human Reproduction Programme. “Female Genital Mutilation Cost Calculator.” <<https://srhr.org/fgmcost/>>
⁶Post et al. “The Rape Tax: Intangible and Intangible Costs of Sexual Violence.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 2002; 17(7):773-782.