

CIRCUMCISION:

THE WRONG STRATEGY FOR FIGHTING HIV

- 1. More effective, non-surgical HIV prevention methods already exist.** Condoms and other safe sex practices protect all sexual partners over the long term.
- 2. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are not applicable to the real world.** The three African “trials” have not been replicated anywhere and, because members of the “control” groups were either circumcised or lost to follow-up, there is no way of tracking long-term results.
- 3. Mass circumcision campaigns squander limited resources by failing to identify those most at risk, and failing to offer unbiased information.** Supporting circumcision of children and men who are not at risk and may never be at risk is unethical and wasteful.
- 4. Mass circumcision campaigns are unscientific.** Men are being circumcised regardless of their HIV status, putting their partners at risk, and making accurate assessment of the campaigns’ efficacy impossible.
- 5. Mass circumcision campaigns are unethical.** Patient protections such as informed consent and follow-up for long-term complications are cursory or absent. Evidence is emerging that boys and men who refuse circumcision are being stigmatized and excluded from participation in sports and other social activities.
- 6. Mass circumcision campaigns attempt to normalize and sell circumcision in cultures where the intact male body is traditionally valued.** Boys – like girls – should be protected from genital cutting to which they cannot consent, and which has lifelong consequences.
- 7. Male circumcision puts women at GREATER risk for contracting HIV.** Women whose circumcised male partners erroneously believe they cannot spread the disease will be unable to negotiate safe sex practices.
- 8. Circumcision results in burdensome complications in boys and men.** The World Health Organization has noted that clinical circumcisions have an 18% complication rate. A neonatal circumcision complication rate of 20.2% was found in Nigeria.
- 9. General population data show circumcision to be associated with higher rates of HIV in many countries around the world.** In Zimbabwe, where a mass circumcision campaign is in full swing, recent government statistics showed an HIV prevalence of 12% in intact men and 14% in circumcised men.
- 10. CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT PREVENT AIDS.**