



DOCTORS OPPOSING CIRCUMCISION

PHYSICIANS SUPPORTING GENITAL INTEGRITY

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*“Fear, pain, crippling, disfigurement and humiliation are the classic ways to break the human spirit.
Circumcision includes them all.”*

Sunday, October 09, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Doctors Opposing Circumcision is an organisation of medical doctors who believe that the genital integrity provides the highest degree of physical, emotional, and sexual health and well-being. We seek to reduce the incidence of genital cutting worldwide.

A recent cost-utility study indicates that non-circumcision produces better health than circumcision.¹

The non-therapeutic circumcision of male children is an unethical operation. Excision of healthy tissue is prohibited by Article 20(1) of the *European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine* (1997).² In addition, two recent articles in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* (London) report that the non-therapeutic circumcision of male children an unethical medical practice.^{3 4}

Doctors Opposing Circumcision has examined the proposals of NOCIRC_SA. We find them to be consistent with principles of medical ethics, the international law of human rights, the Constitution of South Africa, and good medical practice. We believe them to be in the best interests of the children of South Africa.

Accordingly, we strongly urge the adoption of the proposal of NOCIRC-SA.

Very truly yours,

George Hill, Bioethicist
Executive Secretary

¹ Van Howe RS. A cost-utility analysis of neonatal circumcision. *Med Decis Making* 2004;24:584-601. Available at URL: <http://mdm.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/24/6/584>

² European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (1997). Adopted at Oviedo, 4 April 1997. Available at URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/164.htm>

³ Hodges FM, Svoboda JS, Van Howe RS. Prophylactic interventions on children: balancing human rights with public health. *J Med Ethics* 2002;28(1):10-16. Available at URL: <http://jme.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/28/1/10>

⁴ Fox M, Thomson M. A covenant with the status quo? Male circumcision and the new BMA guidance to doctors. *J Med Ethics* 2005;31(8):463-9. Available at URL: <http://jme.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/31/8/463>