

Review of: "Discussing Female Genital Mutilation by youth health care professionals in the Netherlands: facilitators and barriers"

Thelma Mort

Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

This is a very interesting paper about how Youth centre health care workers in the Netherlands cope with counselling migrant women and girls about FGM/C, and the aids and barriers to their work, many of which are socio-cultural . This is important work in the prevention and discontinuation of a practice which affects millions of women world-wide, and as such this is a very important study.

The findings and the logic of the paper are well laid out and sustained. I have three recommendations:

I think an obvious recommendation would be that peer educators were trained from the target population at the youth centres, and that counsellors (nurses, doctors, youth care workers) were given specific training and practice in discussing FGM/C. My last recommendation is that migrant children are not singled out at school when amongst their peers to be taken into another room in order for a conversation to occur about FGM/C as the act of separating children when grouped makes them feel self conscious.

With regard to the rest of the paper, the limitations are well described and are clear.

The discussion of the findings could be a much bigger section, and could be meatier.

Apart from the above comments I would like to say how much I enjoyed the quite modest tone of the paper, and that I think it is a very useful study, in an age of great migration and need to increase interpersonal understanding It could be enhanced further by greater attention to language:

There are just a few grammatical issues which need attention and I have discussed them below:

Some grammatical issues which relate to formatting or layout but also affect meaning occur for instance, there should be a full stop after "(participant 5, a nurse)" not before. The next sentence which begins with "YHCPs..." should

'Of course I am against FGM/C. It is horrible that someone's body is maltreated in that way. Also, there are severe physical and emotional implications of that unnecessary practice'. (participant 5, a nurse) YHCPs start the conversation with introducing the topic and by explaining why they ask questions about FGM/C. According to the YHCPs, mothers react to the discussion of this topic by saying that they will not carry out the procedure.

(This is under Results, section 2).

Under Results, section 3, some clumsy language:

1. **“Facilitators and barriers to discuss FGM/C”** this is the title of this section and it would be better expressed by “Aids and barriers to discussing FGM/C”. An aid is something which assists one whereas a facilitator is usually seen as a person who facilitates.
2. “According to the YHCPs several structural factors could be considered to be a facilitator in the FGM/C prevention.” this would be better expressed as “ According to the YHCPs several structural factors facilitate FGM/C prevention.”
3. “No linguistic problems were mentioned and formal interpreters can be called in.”

This is clumsy language, which potentially interferes with meaning . The authors mean to say that "No language barriers were reported but language interpreters could have been used if there were communication difficulties." The original sentence seems to change tense midway too.

Under Results, section 4:

4. “Therefore, conditions to have a confidential conversation with the girl are lacking” - would be better as “It is difficult to have a confidential conversation in such an environment.”
5. “People from the target group often lack proficiency in Dutch language ”- this should read “the Dutch language” or just “in Dutch”

Under Limitations:

6. “The data for this study have been collected in only one public health institution” should read “The data for this study has been collected in only one public health institution” as data is a collective noun and therefore singular.

Under Conclusion:

7. “YHCPs are burdened with the difficult task to discuss a topic that is not familiar to them and surrounded by secrets should read “YHCPs are burdened with the difficult task to discuss a topic that is not familiar to them and surrounded by secrets