

Prevalence and Factors Associated with Female Genital Mutilation in Erbil, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Background: Globally, between 100 and 140 million girls and women are affected by female genital mutilation, according to the World Health Organization, which estimates that 3 million girls are subjected to it each year. It is a common practice in the Kurdistan area of Iraq. This study's objective is to ascertain the prevalence of female genital mutilation and its contributing factors in Erbil, Iraq.

Methods: From September 1 to December 15, 2022, a convenience sample of 700 women attending primary health care facilities in and around Erbil, Iraq, were the subjects of a questionnaire-based cross-sectional study. The data collected included socioeconomic and demographic information, the participants' and their mothers' mutilation status, their educational attainment, and their opinions and justifications for genital mutilation.

Results: Female genital mutilation was more common outside of Erbil city (56.8%) than inside the city (50.3%), and it was more common among married women (57.3%) than single women (38%) in Erbil city. There was a statistically significant association between female mutilation and women's job level. The largest prevalence of mutilation was found among women with low monthly income (65.6%), compared to middle and high monthly income (54.5%) and (37%) correspondingly, and the association between monthly income status and mutilation was statistically significant.

Conclusion: More than half of individuals continue to have genital cutting. It is closely correlated with factors such as age, marital status, place of residence, educational level, job status, mothers' mutilation status, and parents' educational level. Custom is the primary justification for practice that warrants more research.

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