



Attorneys for the Rights of the Child

Protecting Children's Bodily Integrity
Newsletter

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Court Rules Circumcision Of Four-Year Old Boy Illegal

Helsingin Sanomat, July 8, 2006

Finland's first court ruling on male child circumcision was handed down by a Finnish court on Friday. A Muslim mother faced charges of assault in Tampere District Court for having her four year old son circumcised.

The incident was reported to the police by the boy's father, who had not been consulted.

The court found that the mother's action was illegal. However, it did not assign any punishment. The mother defended her action by saying that she thought that circumcisions performed by doctors were legal in Finland. The case now goes to the Court of Appeals. The mother said that the procedure is part of the family's religion and cultural heritage. The court found that interfering with personal inviolability could be allowed only in cases specifically permitted by law.

"There is a perception in Finland that only girls' circumcision are banned by law. There is no specific legislation about them; both types are illegal under the same criminal law. After all, in both procedures, part of healthy genitalia is removed without medical foundation, or competent consent", says local prosecutor Jouko Nurminen. Nurminen says that the "misconception" may have arisen in connection with the drafting of the new constitution, at which time only the circumcision of girls was part of the debate.

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Matthew Hess

Legislative Efforts Expand To Reach More States, U.N.

By Matthew Hess

This February, MGMbill.org expanded its legislative effort in Congress and California by submitting MGM Bill proposals to 14 additional state legislatures, as well as the United Nations.

By way of our new state office program, more than 2,700 federal and state lawmakers received letters requesting that they sponsor the MGM Bill for their jurisdiction. Some of the legislators wrote back to us, and many of their letters are available at www.mgmbill.org/govresponses.htm.

As part of our effort to build popular support for the MGM Bill proposals (which would amend current U.S. female genital mutilation laws to be gender neutral), MGMbill.org exhibited at the Amnesty International USA 2006 Annual General Meeting in Portland, Oregon (highlights are available at www.mgmbill.org/ai.htm).

Amnesty International was one of the first widely known groups to recognize female circumcision as a

human rights violation, and it is my hope that our ongoing activities within the Amnesty organization will one day help pave the way for AI to take up a similar position on male circumcision.

On the medical front, MGMbill.org is working to convince the American Academy of Pediatrics to revise their Circumcision Policy Statement, which discriminates against males when compared to their Female Genital Mutilation Policy Statement.

MGMbill.org's new Male Genital Mutilation Policy Statement (www.mgmbill.org/mgm_policy.pdf) was submitted to the AAP in March as an alternative, and it is now circulating among decision makers inside the AAP.

Talking to World Leaders

With the tremendous media attention being paid to the ongoing circumcision and HIV/AIDS studies in Africa, MGMbill.org is also lobbying four United Nations agencies to formally adopt the following circumcision policy:

[UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA] recognizes that male children have the same genital integrity rights as female children, and we acknowledge that medically unnecessary circumcision of minors is a violation of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. If circumcision is practiced at all, it should only be performed on fully informed consenting adults."

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Sarita, Steven and Eli Svoboda

Message from the Executive Director

I continue to marvel at how quickly time zooms by. Another eight months have passed since our last newsletter, and it's time for another NOCIRC Symposium, the Ninth and my sixth! It's great and sobering at the same time to be the closest I've ever been to my home for a symposium, back in this hotbed of violations of genital integrity.

The Seattle NOCIRC Symposium is upon us, and it promises to be fabulous. (See sidebar on p.3.)

The struggle to protect genital integrity is at the same time more successful and is facing more serious challenges than it has confronted in recent memory.

Circumcision advocates continue to cobble together shoddy medical studies ostensibly demonstrated that cutting boys will help stop HIV/AIDS, while puzzlingly ignoring the possibility of comparable or perhaps even more substantial benefits available from female genital cutting.

At the same conference that introduced the horrendously flawed Auvert study, (about which I recently spoke on Los Angeles area radio station KKZZ), which attracted a whirlwind of publicity, another study showing that *female* genital cutting may offer similar protection against HIV/AIDS was studiously ignored.

Clearly a political agenda is at work here.

One important case in which ARC represented the plaintiffs was recently concluded with a \$20,000 jury award to the lead plaintiff. Plaintiff Joseph Minas is an Armenian man who, when he went in for a vasectomy, was instead erroneously circumcised by the defendant physician, who had attempted to blame the nurse for his error. Joseph sustained substantial harm to his sexuality. The trauma also directly caused his separation from his wife. He and his wife sued for damages. We were pleased to be able to help Mr. Minas obtain a measure of justice.

The Chicago lawsuit by a father determined to protect his son has caught worldwide attention, and we reproduce a couple of the leading articles elsewhere in these pages. (ARC was not directly involved in this case.)

We are proud to be able to bring back Matthew Hess to these pages to update us on the indispensable achievements of MGMBill.Org, and to introduce you to Robert Blissitt and his superb reflections on this past spring's gathering of intactivists at the conference of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

You will also find a review of the excellent new DVD, "Birth as We Know It," and a preview of the upcoming Springer publication of the proceedings of the Padua symposium. Enjoy! And please let us know if you have a friend or colleague who would like to be added to the ARC subscription list, which we have always offered free of charge.

On June 15, I was interviewed by Maria Sanchez for "The Connection" KKZZ 1590 AM Ventura in an overview of genital integrity and intactivism. The show was rebroadcast on July 4, 2006. Maria

interviewed me again on July 17 regarding the study by Auvert suggesting that circumcision can help prevent HIV/AIDS.

On July 15, I appeared along with Marilyn Milos of NOCIRC on a special program about circumcision broadcast by Toronto's Sex TV Channel (www.sextelevision.net), a division of City TV. Interviewer Michelle Melles was quite sympathetic and knowledgeable and put together an excellent program. DVDs of the program are available from ARC. Just email me (arc@post.harvard.edu).

Welcome to newsletter co-editor Art Coons and acting co-editor Mark Sherman. Art is a pre-med student at the University of Seattle, and Mark is a journalism professional. A heartfelt thank you to former editor Al Fields, with us from the beginning and now moving on to other projects.

Meanwhile, the donations page has been upgraded to facilitate online donations, which are tax-deductible. Indeed, everyone at ARC owes a sincere debt to our loyal and highly valued supporters for our continued health (in all senses of the word). Best wishes to all!



\$20,000 Jury Award: Plaintiffs Joseph and Marilyn Minas (2nd and 3rd from left), Steven Svoboda (far right), and collaborating attorneys

UPDATE: We just received word that Zenas Baer won an important victory for his clients in a circumcision case involving a lack of consent. Bravo, Zenas!

Activists to Meet in Seattle For Ninth Conference

The 9th International Symposium on Circumcision, Genital Integrity and Human Rights will be held Aug. 24-26 at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Speakers include familiar friends such as David Chamberlain (the delusional psychologies of circumcision), Jody McLaughlin, Frederick Hodges (Abraham Wolbarst and eugenic circumcision), James Snyder, John Dalton, Morris Sorrells, Len Glick (foreskin cutting in the Philippines), Northern Ireland's firebrand Linda Massie, Sweden's venerable Yngve Hofvander, Miriam Pollack (defining what is sacred), and the passionate Suzanne Arms.

We will also get to meet new colleagues such as UK lawyers Marie Fox and Michael Thomson (determining the best interest of the child), Zachary Androus (cultural relativism at home and abroad), Gloria Lemay (a midwife's project to end circumcision), and Rebecca Wald (one Jewish mother's experience).

International perspectives will come from Olaye Olusoji Emmanuel (effect of FGM on global health and sexuality), Debora Moro (female genital modifications in Malawi), Franco Viviani (alternative FGM rites in Somalia), Romeo B. Lee (Filipino male experience of ritual circumcision), and Primus Lake (traditional male circumcision in West Timor).

Also, Mostafa K. Al-Madawi will discuss "Muslims and Circumcision," DOC General Counsel John Geisheker will talk about using writs of mandamus, and ARC's Steven Svoboda will offer "A Treatise from the Trenches: Why Are Circumcision Lawsuits So Hard to Win?"

Details are at www.nocirc.org/symposia/ninth/symposium.pdf.

Putting Circumcision in Context of Wider Social Change Helps Defuse Resistance, D.C. Organizer Says

By Mark W. Sherman

Intactivists sometimes find that no matter how gently they broach the topic of male genital cutting, they are met with indifference or even hostility. After all, why worry about circumcision, some people say, when there's a war in Iraq going on? For that matter, why worry about circumcision when, as a parent, I have other things to worry about?

But in the suburbs of Washington, Ryan McAllister has found a way to put circumcision in a larger framework, putting his listeners at ease while reaching people who may never have thought of circumcision as part of the things they already care about.

In January, for example, McAllister did two workshops at the National Conference on Organized Resistance at American University, one on parenting and social change, the other on pregnancy and birth.

It was "an environment where people were already thinking about peace and social change," said McAllister, executive director of NotJustSkin in Hyattsville, Md., and a biophysicist at Georgetown University. By connecting circumcision to that agenda, he said, he could "bring it up in a way that does not invite defensiveness."

This is not to say that McAllister was preaching to the choir about opposing circumcision. Some people said, "Yeah, that's totally right," but others said, "Wow, I've got some thinking to do," he said. "I actually like the second reaction better."

McAllister will lead a similar workshop Sept. 11 at a gathering in Washington called Camp Democracy, but the peace movement is not his only audience. On Oct.

14-15, for example, NotJustSkin volunteers will be manning a booth at the D.C. Green Festival, an event for the environmentally conscious set.

McAllister also gives workshops on parenting generally, on the theory that "Thinking Well about Children Promotes Everyone's Well-Being," as the group's website puts it. In October, for example, he will speak at an event hosted by Robin O'Brien, president of the Birthing Circle of Frederick in Frederick, Md.

"If I'm helping them understand their relationship with their children ... it may open them up a little bit."

Ryan McAllister, exec. director
NotJustSkin

McAllister's broad-based approach is evident on his group's website, which has information not just about circumcision but about caesarians, epidurals, episiotomies, and surgery for children with ambiguous genitalia, along with breastfeeding, nontoxic households and even co-sleeping.

"I talk about how ... parents are good people. They want to do well, and we talk about what makes that hard," he said. And by laying that groundwork, he is able to raise topics, like circumcision, that can be hard to discuss.

"You need to build trust with people," he said, especially on subjects "they may have so much emotion wrapped around. ... If I'm helping them understand their relationship with their children, they can see my intention more clearly, it may open them up a little bit."

Ryan McAllister can be reached at (301) 779-8388, ryan@notjustskin.org.

DVD Examines Parameters of Birthing

By J. Steven Svoboda

Elena Vladimirova, formerly known as Elena Tonetti, has created a remarkable DVD that explores "conscious birth."

Conscious birth seems not to be a cut-and-dried birthing technique but rather refers to a broader perspective encompassing such possible features as water birth, natural birth, home birth, use of midwives and doulas, absence of circumcision, absence of episiotomy, and indeed, absence of physicians from the birth process.

Both mother and father will bring all of themselves to the ideal conscious birth, loving their baby beyond the power of words to con-



vey and welcoming him or her into the world with the gentlest and most loving introduction possible.

This DVD is deeply, at times almost painfully, moving and is profoundly worth viewing for all intactivists. While only six minutes of the film relate directly to circumcision, this segment is fascinating in itself, and is well-integrated into the flow of the film as a whole. Handily enough, this portion can also be easily located in the feature film thanks to its inclusion among the menu's special features.

In my opinion, the film would have benefited from being edited by a sympathetic outside party. The same message could easily be conveyed by a film shorter than

this one's 200 total minutes (75 minutes for the feature film), and for most people the effectiveness would be improved.

I also found Ms. Vladimirova's Russian accent distracting, especially given the length of the video. It would feel more appropriate and also more ear-friendly for voices to be provided by a variety of speakers, perhaps by both men and women, and certainly by some for whom English is a native tongue.

Overall, "Birth as we know it" is an excellent film, and is highly recommended to all people interested in genital integrity and the process by which babies enter our world.

"Birth as we know it," by Elena Vladimirova Tonetti. Chico, California: Birth into Being, 2006. Approx. 200 minutes with special features. \$49.95. www.birthintobeing.com.

Dad Sues to Prevent Son's Circumcision; Judge Temporarily Blocks Procedure

Chicago Tribune, Feb. 19, 2006

A Cook County judge Friday ordered a mother not to circumcise her 8-year-old son until the court can hear arguments from the child's father, who opposes the operation, and decide whether it is in the boy's best interests.

The mother, a 31-year-old homemaker from Northbrook, says two doctors have recommended the procedure to prevent recurrent infections. Her ex-husband, a 49-year-old building manager who lives in Arlington Heights, calls the operation an "unnecessary amputation" that could cause his son physical and emotional harm.

The Tribune is not naming the parents to protect the child's privacy.

Circumcision, in which the foreskin of the penis is surgically removed, usually before a newborn leaves the hospital, was extremely common in the U.S. during the last century. But the percentage of U.S. babies being circumcised has gone down from an estimated 90 percent in 1970 to some 60 percent today.

The American Academy of Pediatrics no longer recommends routine neonatal circumcision but says the decision should be left up to the parents. In recent years, the procedure has come under fire from a small but vocal group who believe it is the equivalent of female genital mutilation. They argue, in an increasing number of legal challenges, that the procedure is medically unnecessary and morally indefensible.

There are no published U.S. opinions to serve as precedents for the current case, and legal experts said it likely would be determined based on the best interests of the child. Both sides appeared Friday in Cook County Circuit Court, where the father asked Judge Jordan Kaplan for a temporary restraining order against his ex-wife. His attorneys, John D'Arco and Alan Toback, argued that the couple's divorce agreement provided that the father had to be consulted before any non-emergency medical care.

Kaplan got the two sides to agree that the child would not be circumcised "until further order of [the] court." He also ordered them not to discuss the case with their child. The mother's attorney, Tracy Rizzo, said the father had scared the child by telling him horror stories about what can happen to boys who are circumcised. According to Dr. Irwin Benuck, a pediatrician at Children's Memorial Hospital, and Dr. Clare Close, a pediatric urologist at the University of Chicago Hospitals, circumcision is an outpatient procedure and any discomfort is usually gone in less than a week.

“Complications are pretty rare,” said Benuck. Whatever the outcome, the dispute itself is not good for the child, said Dr. Sharon Hirsch, a child psychiatrist at the University of Chicago. “When parents fight,” said Hirsch, “it leaves the child feeling insecure. Parents need to work things out away from their children and then present a unified front.”

In England, a Muslim father in 1999 lost his battle to have his 5-year-old son circumcised against the wishes of the mother, with whom the child lives. (Jews and Muslims circumcise their sons for religious reasons.) A judge ruled that circumcision was not in the child’s interests and might traumatize him.

Boy’s Circumcision Center Of Parents’ Lawsuit; Mother Says Surgery Is Medically Necessary For 8-Year-Old

WMAQ TV, www.NBC5.com

CHICAGO -- A suburban father has filed suit to stop his ex-wife from circumcising their son, who is 8 years old.

The father, who testified in the case Tuesday, says circumcision is needed only if a serious medical condition is present. But the boy’s mother says he has battled many infections, some so painful he sometimes can’t sleep at night.

The case will be decided by a judge’s interpretation of analysis from several doctors.

In court, the father of the third-grader said, “My son is a healthy boy. I believe after circumcision he can have some complications not just physically, but psychologically.”

According to a report in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the parents’ divorce decree gives the father a voice on big medical issues for the

boy, who will turn 9 in less than a month. Attorney Tracy Rizzo, who represents the boy’s mother, said the child’s foreskin has been infected five times since last spring.

“It’s inflammation, puss, soreness. The child has been in pain, he has trouble putting his pants on. He cries at night because he can’t sleep,” Rizzo said.

But the father’s attorney called the surgery “absolutely unnecessary.”

“It’s unclear that this child had anything other than a little dermatitis. There are other ways of handling it,” attorney David Llewellyn said.

For more than an hour, the boy’s a father, a native of Poland, sat before a judge and answered questions from both attorneys. “When you have an infection of your finger you don’t try and cut it off. You try and treat it,” the boy’s father said. But the mother’s attorney said the father is really motivated by religion.

“He thinks that circumcision is something his religion doesn’t allow,” Rizzo said. “He thinks my client has ulterior motives to having the circumcision, which she does not. I don’t think it’s a medical issue for him.”

But the father’s attorneys said this is just a case of simple infection -- and that a skin infection shouldn’t prompt genital surgery. “It can be caused by soap and a number of other things. It is rare in a child to have a true infection. No one will testify that anyone saw any real pus or infection, just some redness, some dermatitis.”

The boy’s mother is scheduled to testify Wednesday about the pain and infections she says her son has dealt with for more than a year. The boy’s pediatrician will also take the stand to outline why he believes the surgery is necessary.

Attorneys for the Rights of the Child

2961 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705

Fax/phone: 510-595-5550

www.arclaw.org

email: arc@post.harvard.edu

J. Steven Svoboda, executive director

Jeff Borg, graphic designer

Richard Angell, research/translation

Mark W. Sherman, acting co-editor

Art Coons, co-editor

Nelson Vega, collaborator

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GETTING THE WORD OUT

On June 15, Steven Svoboda was interviewed by Maria Sanchez for “The Connection” KKZZ 1590 AM Ventura regarding an overview of genital integrity and intactivism. The show was rebroadcast on July 4, 2006.

On July 15, Svoboda appeared along with Marilyn Milos of NOCIRC on a special program about circumcision broadcast by Toronto’s Sex TV Channel (www.sextelevision.net), a division of City TV.

On July 17, Maria Sanchez interviewed Svoboda for “The Connection” KKZZ 1590 AM Ventura regarding the study by Auvert et al. suggesting that circumcision can help prevent HIV/AIDS.

On August 14, Dr. Mark David Reiss of Doctors Opposing Circumcision (DOC) and Svoboda gave an invited presentation on the ethical and legal implications of circumcision to a group of 17 pediatricians at Kaiser Point West in Sacramento, Calif.

The doctors received continuing medical education credit for the event. Reiss and Svoboda distributed NOCIRC’s patient education brochures along with statements by medical organizations. The Fleiss/Hodges book was on display, along with Svoboda’s article on consent (written with Van Howe and Dwyer). DOC and ARC built bridges that will be useful.

Activists Dialog With Obstetricians, Gynecologists



Len Glick at ACOG meeting in Washington

By Robert Blissitt

Having heard tales of arrogant doctors and a street corner besieged by pro-life demonstrators at the 2005 ACOG demonstration, I arrived at the 2006 event ready for confrontation.

I did not find what I expected. The pro-life demonstrators were there, but ample sidewalk space allowed for peaceful co-existence and even occasional conversations. ACOG Doctors and staff, a small number of whom have been contemptuous of our presence in times past, were largely silent or seemed disinterested in our presence.

Of the handful of circumcision demonstrations I've attended in the past three years, this ACOG demonstration seemed to have the least impact, but also the most potential.

There were five to seven of us outside the convention hall this year at any given moment. I gave up trying to hand out D.O.C. information to the doctors as they just kept walking by. Thereafter I simply stood quietly, holding a sign, nodding and smiling at the attendees.

With all the negative comments and imagery coming from the pro-life side, I thought docs might be drawn to a smiling face, or at least be more receptive to our message. The ACOG docs that did stop to talk were often in agreement with us, so I simply asked

them to write in a request on any conference evaluation form that our "professional arm" to be granted a booth at the next conference as they have been at the AAP conventions.

Joanne Silberner of NPR fame stopped by and talked to Dan Stranjord as David Wilson and I looked on from behind our signs. Since I had just begun pitching Leonard Glick's book to one of NPR's senior editors, I thought she might be looking for Len, but it turns out she was simply covering the conference as NPR's health policy correspondent.

I spoke with her briefly and later followed up with an email asking if she might cover our issue. She responded that her story list was "six months long, but [she] would keep my note on file."

Discussing Personal Practices

Without a doubt, the most informative conversation I had was with a female OB-GYN with two intact sons. She agreed with us and said she counseled parents against circumcision, but would still do them if requested.

She and a few other attendees thought that most of the doctors didn't like doing them, but performed them simply because they didn't want the parents to go to someone else for the delivery. She also felt doctors would be insulted by our perennial banner about "torture" and even the banner stating that "ethical doctors" don't do circumcisions.

She urged us to simply state the facts, perhaps with signs such as "The American Academy of Pediatrics doesn't recommend circumcision." She seemed certain that there were ACOG docs inside the convention hall that didn't know this basic fact.

Standing there cooking under the D.C. sun, I thought about what needed to happen to make our next

ACOG demonstration a more effective one.

1. We need to make ACOG, not AAP, our must-attend event as the AAP has already given us a booth and OB-GYN's perform the majority of circumcisions anyway.
2. As part of the NOCIRC/ARC/DOC effort to get a booth at future ACOG conventions, I hope our group will send photos to ACOG of the many interested doctors who were crowded around the no-circ booth at the AAP convention.
3. We need to emphasize that our outside demonstrators at the AAP convention were a much more pleasant bunch once the AAP granted our professional arm a booth inside, but for that to have any impact, we need to have more people at ACOG in the first place.



Robert Blissitt

Looking back at the last AAP convention, I felt happily superfluous, what with all the positive reports coming from our booth inside the convention hall.

At ACOG, however, I felt unhappily ignored, likely thanks to our small presence. Barring a compelling reason to keep focused on the AAP, I hope that by 2008 our focus turns to ACOG.

One last thing to add to my list of my three demonstration thoughts above:

4. Sunscreen. Next time, bring sunscreen....

New Publications Spread Word About Genital Integrity

Our writing efforts continue, including a gender studies textbook addressing genital integrity issues entitled, *Does Feminism Discriminate Against Men? A Debate* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press and cowritten with Warren Farrell, Ph.D. and James Sterba, Ph.D.) Other items include:

“HIV and Circumcision: Cutting through the Hyperbole,” co-written with Bob Van Howe, M.D. and Frederick Hodges, Ph.D., *Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health* (Volume 125, Number 6 (November 2005), pp. 259-265).

“Genital Integrity and Gender Equity,” by J. Steven Svoboda, in G.C. Denniston, P. Grassivaro Gallo, F.M. Hodges, M.F. Milos, and F. Viviani, eds., *Bodily Integrity and the Politics of Circumcision*, Plenum/Kluwer Academic Press, 2006 (forthcoming)

“Male Circumcision as Medical Violence and a Human Rights Violation,” with Robert S. Van Howe, M.D., *Harvard Journal of Health and Human Rights*, under consideration.

“Neonatal Pain Relief and the Helsinki Declaration,” with Robert S. Van Howe, M.D., *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics*, under consideration.

“A rose by any other name? Rethinking the similarities/differences between male circumcision and female genital mutilation,” with Robert Darby, Ph.D. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, under consideration.

Darby is author of *A Surgical Temptation: The Demonization of the Foreskin and the Rise of Circumcision in Britain*.

“Gender, Law and Society,” bimonthly column, GRIP (formerly *Everyman*), ongoing (started with November/December 1998 issue).

Why Winning In Court Is Harder Than It Ought to Be

Among the growing trove of documents about circumcision is the forthcoming presentation by ARC Executive Director J. Steven Svoboda at the Ninth Symposium on Circumcision, Genital Integrity, and Human Rights in Seattle (see story, p. 3).

Successful circumcision-related lawsuits are extremely difficult to bring, Svoboda says. Actual cases ARC has brought show that among factors impeding progress are:

- Financial risks
- Procedural difficulties
- Misconceptions and compassion misallocation among judges, lawyers, jury members, media, and the general public
- Constrains unique to circumcision lawsuits imposed by statutes of limitation and statutes of repose
- Need for parental participation in lawsuits
- Problem of damages not being atrocious enough to justify litigation
- Scarcity of helpful case law

Players whose roles will be scrutinized include clients, lawyers, judges, juries, court and procedures, doctors, media, and fellow activists.

Svoboda will discuss the many reasons why potential plaintiffs never even make it to the filing stage. He will look at why judges and juries are starting to understand that just having a foreskin is not reason enough to have a circumcision.

“A Treatise from the Trenches: Why Are Circumcision Lawsuits So Hard to Win?” in G.C. Denniston, M.F. Milos, and F. Hodges, eds., is forthcoming from Springer in 2007.

Bodily Integrity and the Politics of Circumcision: Culture, Controversy, and Change

Denniston, G.C.; Grassivaro Gallo, P.; Hodges, F.M.; Milos, M.F.; Viviani, F. (Eds.), Springer, 2006, CCLXIX, 18 p., Hardcover, \$199, ISBN: 1-4020-4915-3

How is it that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is still possible for males and females to be denied their inherent right to keep all the body parts with which they were born?

Circumcision is a cultural phenomenon that affects 15.3 million children and young adults annually. In terms of gender, 13.3 millions boys and 2 million girls are subjected to the involuntary removal of part or all of their external sex organs every year. Few people, however, ask why such practices persist or how modern societies can tolerate this inherent violation of human rights. The problem of female circumcision is being addressed on an international level, while male circumcision remains a subject many academics are reluctant to fully or impartially examine. This book explores the problem of male and female circumcision in modern society from religious, anthropological, psychological, medical, legal, and ethical perspectives.

Bodily Integrity and the Politics of Circumcision: Culture, Controversy, and Change illuminates the vulnerability of human society to medical, economic, and historical pressures. It provides a much-needed, thoughtful, and detailed analysis of the devastating impact of circumcision on bodily integrity and human rights, and it provides hope for change.

www.springer.com/west/home/generic/search/results?SGWID=4-40109-22-166922976-0

Finland, continued from p. 1

In its decision, the court notes that not even a long religious tradition justifies protecting the bodily inviolability of boys to a lesser degree than that of girls.

A working group of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health proposed a few years ago that circumcision performed under medical supervision in hospitals should be allowed.

The working group wanted to avoid complications from operations performed at home, and to reduce the suffering of the child.

Legislation is somewhat vague on the matter, and practice carries in Finland. For instance, a report drafted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2004 notes that male circumcision is permitted in all countries.

“There is no legislation on male circumcision, but there is no prohibition. The operations have been performed on the basis of common law”, says Riitta-Maija Jouttimaki, a lawyer for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Seen something in the news about circumcision? Send a note to arc@post.harvard.edu.

MGM, continued from p. 1

As of this writing our suggested statement is still under review, along with our proposed WHO Male Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet at www.mgmbill.org/un.htm#mgmfactsheet.

In June, MGMBill.org partnered with BANG and gay rights activists to sponsor an MGM contingent in the 36th Annual LGBT Pride Parade in San Francisco, which is the largest gay pride event in the USA. The 20-person group marched down Market Street holding large banners and signs while waving to a cheering crowd.

A press release with more details on the march is at www.mgmbill.org/pressrelease14.htm.

Superheroes to the rescue

Lastly, MGMBill.org has created a fictitious superhero team to take on male genital mutilation. Foreskin Man and IntactiBabe made their debut on an 11” x 17” color poster, available for purchase at www.mgmbill.org/store.htm.

Together this duo is helping to get the word out on the harmful effects of circumcision, while giving younger victims of MGM hope for the future.



Two boys who are delighted to be intact.

Yes! I support the rights of all children to physical integrity and self-determination. I enclose my contribution or membership dues, which I understand are tax deductible.

I wish to join Attorneys for the Rights of the Child.

\$35 (member) \$100 (sustaining) \$200 (patron) \$_____ (benefactor)

I wish to pledge a monthly contribution to ARC: \$10 \$15 \$20 \$50 Other:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ARC, 2961 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705
Contact: 510-595-5550, arc@post.harvard.edu, www.arclaw.org,