

# Benin

7.3%<sup>1</sup>



## Key Findings

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15-49 is 7.3%.  
About 90% of men and women believe the practice should not continue.<sup>2</sup>

### Geography:

The departments with the highest prevalence are in the north; of Benin's 12 departments, six record a prevalence of less than 1%<sup>3</sup>

### Age:

85.3% of women aged 15-49 who have undergone FGM were cut before the age of 15<sup>4</sup>

### Type:

'Cut, flesh removed' is the most common type of FGM practised<sup>5</sup>

### Agent:

Almost all FGM is carried out by 'traditional agents' (including traditional cutters and birth attendants)<sup>6</sup>

## Development Indicators

**HDI Rank:** 167 out of 188 countries (2015)<sup>7</sup>

**Population:** 11,419,331 (as at 1 May 2017), with a 2.75% growth rate (Nov. 2016 est.)<sup>8</sup>

**Infant Mortality Rate:** 64 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)<sup>9</sup>

**Maternal Mortality Ratio:** 405 deaths per 100,000 live births (2015)<sup>10</sup>

**Literacy:** 38.4% of the total population aged 15 and over can read/write<sup>11</sup>

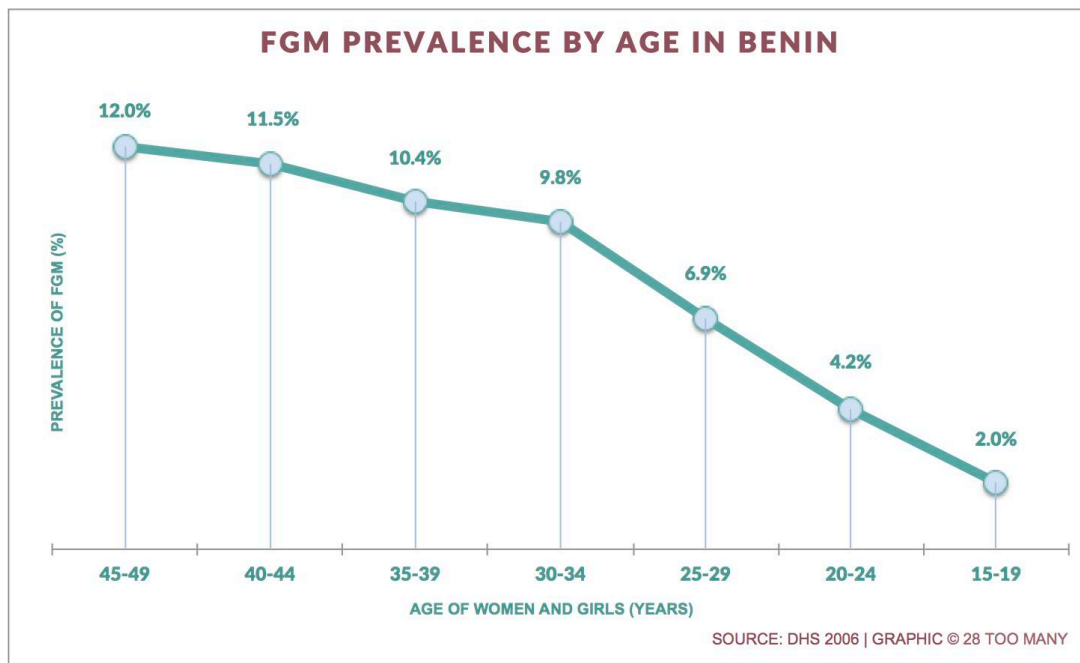
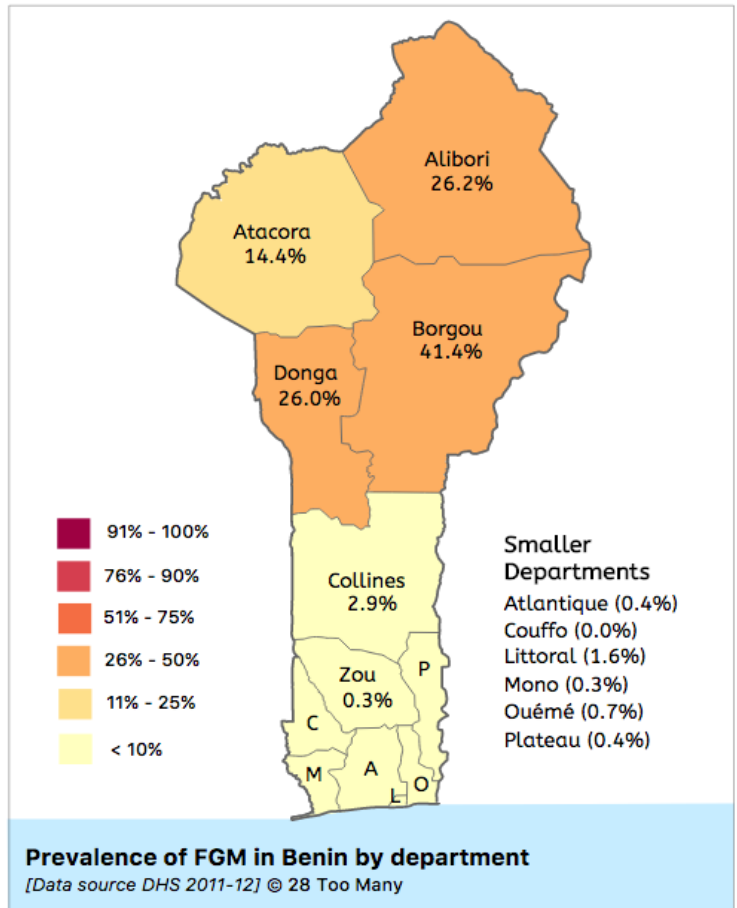
*'I did it with a knife, without anesthesia, and without any medical training.  
The number of lives I shattered is enormous.'  
~ Yon Sokogi, former cutter<sup>12</sup>*

## Prevalence

The departments in Benin with the highest FGM prevalence are in the north: Borgou (41.4%), Alibori (26.2%), Donga (26.0%) and Atacora (14.4%). There is a significant difference between these departments and the rest of Benin, as the department with the next-highest prevalence is Collines, at 2.9%. The department with the lowest prevalence is Couffo, in which no instances of FGM are recorded, and in six of the 12 departments, FGM prevalence is less than 1%. It is slightly more common in women living in rural areas (8.8%) than in those living in urban areas (5.5%).

FGM appears to be practised more by Muslims than by people of other religions, and there is a wide variation in levels of practice between ethnic groups: over 40% prevalence among the Bariba and Peulh, and less than 1% among the Adja and Fon.<sup>13</sup>

Between 2006 and 2001-12, the overall prevalence for women aged 15-49 fell from 12.9% to 7.3%. Due to the large age-range of women included, however, the overall prevalence alone may not fully reflect the progress that has been made in recent years. Breaking down the most recent data by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45-49 is 12%, while for the youngest age group this has fallen to just 2%. Despite the fact that a small proportion of women may be cut after the age of 15, the data demonstrates a clear trend towards lower prevalences among younger women.<sup>14</sup>



## Beninese Law

The Beninese Government passed legislation in March 2003 that specifically prohibits FGM (Article 2 of Law no. 2003-03 on the Repression of the Practice of FGM in the Republic of Benin).

- 1 (**'DHS'**): Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Économique (INSAE) et ICF International (2013) *Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Bénin 2011-2012*, p.332. Calverton, Maryland, USA: INSAE et ICF International. Available at <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR270/FR270.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2017).
- 2 DHS, pp.332 & 340.
- 3 DHS, p.332.
- 4 DHS, p.333.
- 5 DHS, p.332.
- 6 DHS p.337.
- 7 United Nations Development Programme (2015) *Human Development Index*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506> (accessed 16 May 2017).
- 8 - Country Meters (2017) *Benin*, 1 May 2017. Available at <http://countrymeters.info/en/Benin> (accessed 1 May 2017).  
- Central Intelligence Agency (2016) *World Factbook: Benin*, 10 November. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bn.html> (accessed 1 May 2017).
- 9 Countdown to 2030 (2015) *A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival The 2015 Report: Benin*. Available at [http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Benin\\_2015.pdf](http://countdown2030.org/documents/2015Report/Benin_2015.pdf) (accessed 1 May 2017).
- 10 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (2015) *Maternal Mortality in 1990-2015: Benin*. Available at [http://www.who.int/gho/maternal\\_health/countries/ben.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/ben.pdf?ua=1) (accessed 1 May 2017).
- 11 Central Intelligence Agency, *op. cit.*
- 12 Anne Mireille Nzouankeu (2017) 'Cutters turn counselors to fight female genital mutilation in Benin', *Reuters*, 6 February. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-benin-fgm-idUSKBN15L0JZ> (accessed 21 May 2017).
- 13 DHS, p.332.
- 14 - DHS, p.332  
- Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Économique (INSAE) [Bénin] et Macro International Inc. (2007) *Enquête Démographique et de Santé (EDSB-III) - Bénin 2006*, p.152. Calverton, Maryland, USA: Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Économique et Macro International Inc. Available at <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR197/FR197.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2017).

**UNICEF Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:**

UNICEF (2014) *Benin: Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. Available at [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country\\_profiles/Benin/FGMC\\_BEN.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Benin/FGMC_BEN.pdf) (accessed 1 May 2017).

**Images on website:**

- 1 Anton Ivanov (2017) *KOUTAMMAKOU, TOGO – JAN 13, 2017: Unidentified Togolese little girl looks ahead in the village. Togo children suffer of poverty due to the bad economy*. Shutterstock ID 612701249.
- 2 Anton Ivanov (2017) *Unidentified Beninese woman in national suit smiles at the voodoo festival, which is annually celebrated on January, 10th*. Shutterstock ID 612701249.
- 3 Anton Ivanov (2012) *Unidentified Beninese woman with her little child rows a wooden boat. People of Benin suffer of poverty due to the difficult economic situation*. Shutterstock ID 429413545.