

# BENIN



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## STATISTICAL PROFILE ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) refers to “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.”<sup>1</sup> More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where FGM/C is concentrated. As many as 30 million girls are at risk of being cut before their 15th birthday if current trends continue. FGM/C is a violation of girls’ and women’s human rights and is condemned by many international treaties and conventions, as well as by national legislation in many countries. Yet, where it is practised FGM/C is performed in line with tradition and social norms to ensure that girls are socially accepted and marriageable, and to uphold their status and honour and that of the entire family. UNICEF works with government and civil society partners towards the elimination of FGM/C in countries where it is still practised.

1. World Health Organization, Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An interagency statement, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNECA, UNESCO, UNDP, UNAIDS/WHO, Geneva, 2008, p. 4.

**2003** National decree/legislation banning FGM/C passed

### SELECTED STATISTICS ON WOMEN'S STATUS

**11%** of women aged 20 to 24 years were married or in union before age 15

**32%** of women aged 20 to 24 years were married or in union before age 18

**23%** of women aged 20 to 24 years have given birth before age 18

**16%** of women aged 15 to 49 years think that a husband/partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances

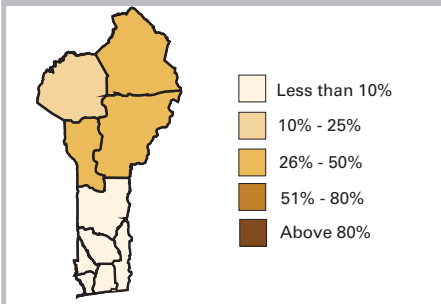
**54%** of women aged 15 to 49 years make use of at least one type of information media at least once a week (newspaper, magazine, television or radio)

Source: DHS 2011-2012

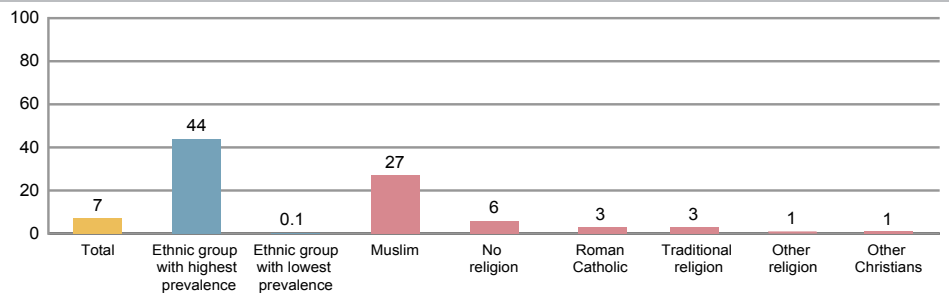
## HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE PRACTICE?

In Benin, important variations in prevalence can be found by region and ethnic groups.

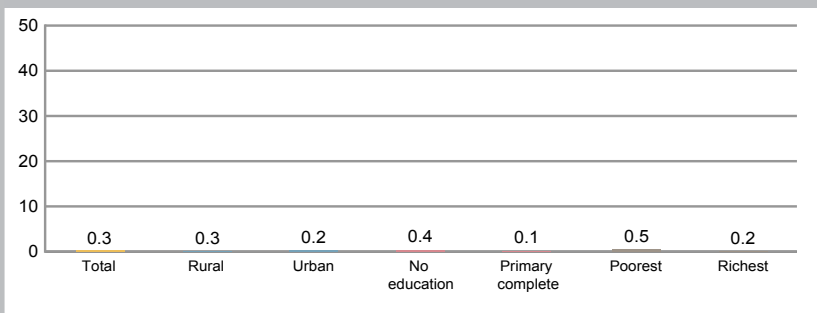
Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, by department



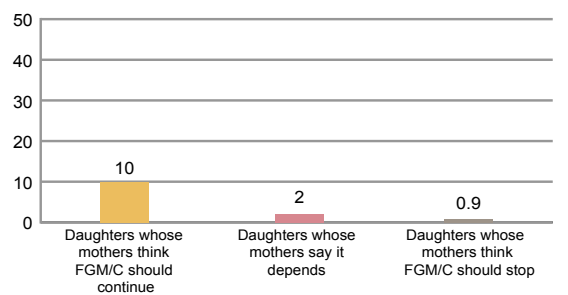
Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, by ethnicity and religion



Percentage of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C (as reported by their mothers), by residence, mother's education and household wealth quintile



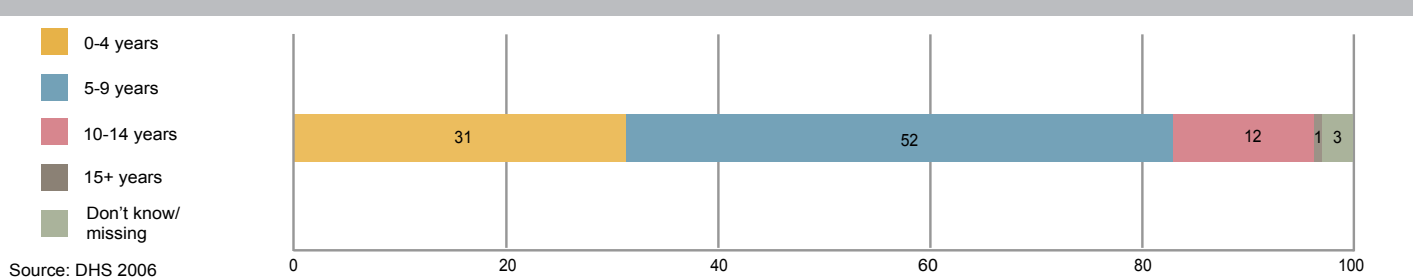
Among daughters of cut girls and women, the percentage of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C (as reported by their mothers), about whether the practice should continue



## WHEN AND HOW IS FGM/C PERFORMED?

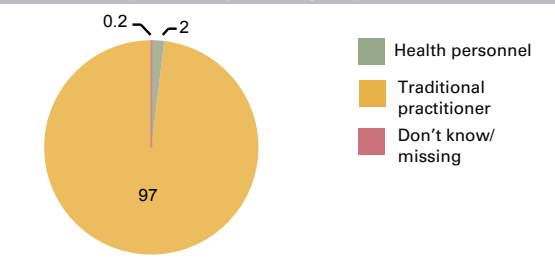
Almost all girls had their genital area cut with some flesh removed by a traditional practitioner

Percentage distribution of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years with at least one living daughter who has undergone FGM/C, by age at which cutting occurred

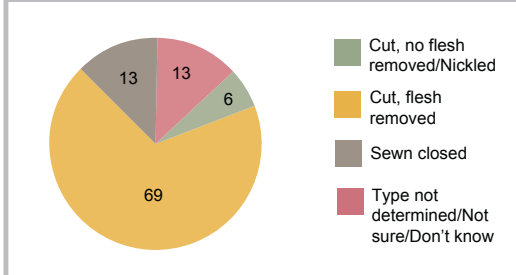


Source: DHS 2006

Percentage distribution of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, according to the type of person/practitioner performing the procedure



Percentage distribution of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, by type of FGM/C performed

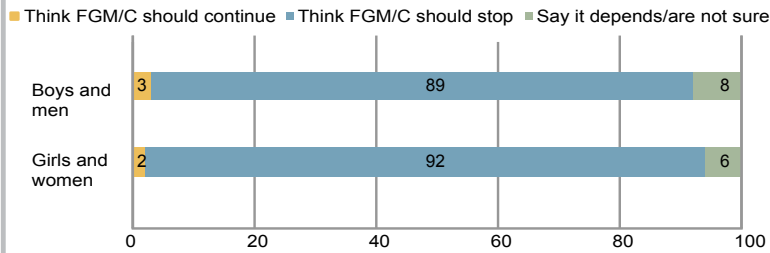


Notes: The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Only categories with 25 or more unweighted cases are presented. Due to rounding, some of the data presented may not add up to 100 per cent. Prevalence data for girls aged 0 to 14 reflect their current, but not final, FGM/C status since some girls who have not been cut may still be at risk of experiencing the practice once they reach the customary age for cutting. Therefore, the data on prevalence for girls under age 15 is actually an underestimation of the true extent of the practice. Since age at cutting varies among settings, the amount of underestimation also varies and this should be kept in mind when interpreting all FGM/C prevalence data for the age group. Older data are used to report on age at cutting since data from the most recent survey includes some girls aged 0 to 14 years who have not undergone FGM/C but are still at risk of experiencing the practice once they have reached the customary age for cutting. 'Health personnel' includes doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers; 'Traditional practitioner' includes traditional circumcisers, traditional birth attendants, traditional midwives and other types of traditional practitioners. Source for all charts on this page: DHS 2011-20 unless otherwise noted

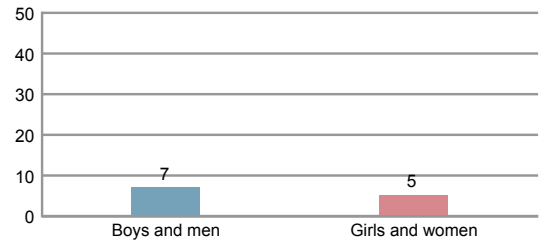
## WHAT ARE THE PREVAILING ATTITUDES TOWARDS FGM/C?

Support for the continuation of FGM/C in Benin is low and most women do not see any benefit to the practice

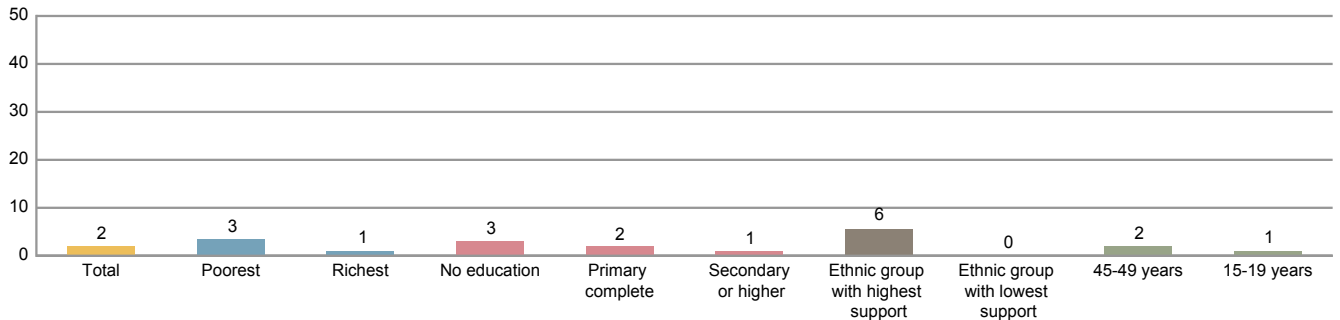
Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years and boys and men aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C, by their attitudes about whether the practice should continue



Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years and boys and men aged 15 to 49 years who have heard of FGM/C and believe the practice is required by religion



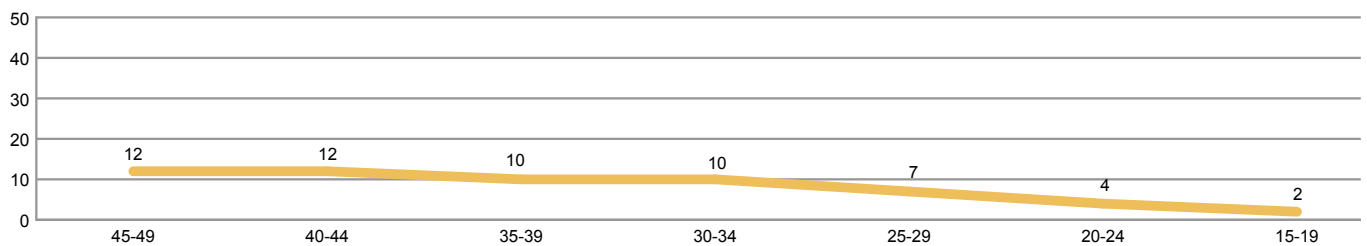
Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue, by household wealth quintile, education, ethnicity and age



## IS THE PRACTICE OF FGM/C CHANGING?

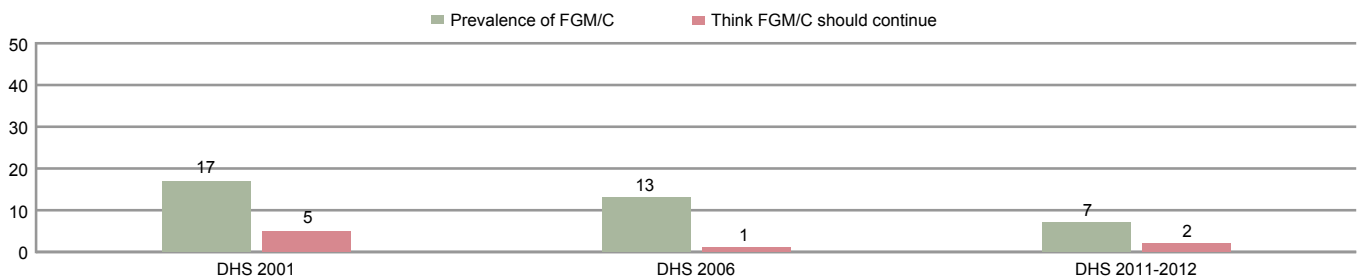
The prevalence of FGM/C in Benin has significantly declined in three decades

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, by current age



Source for all of the above charts: DHS 2011-2012

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C, and percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue

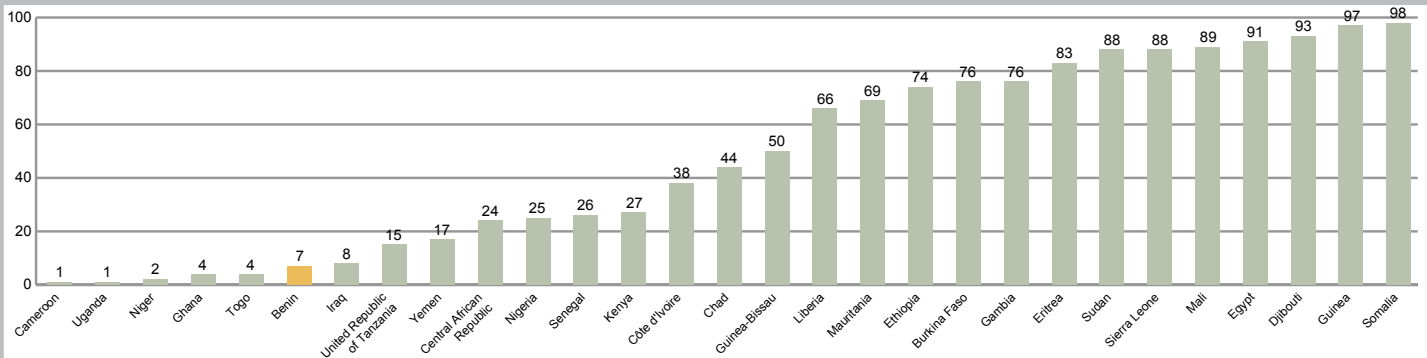


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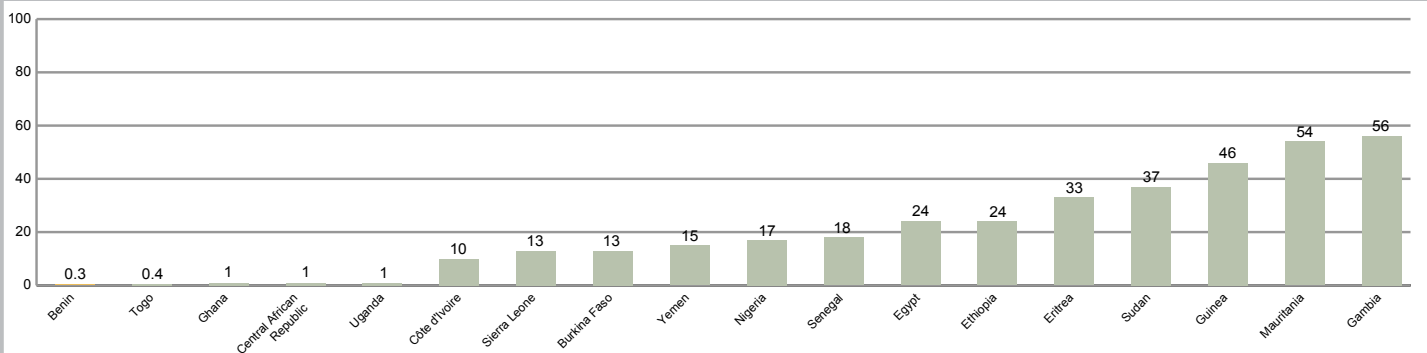


## INTER-COUNTRY STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

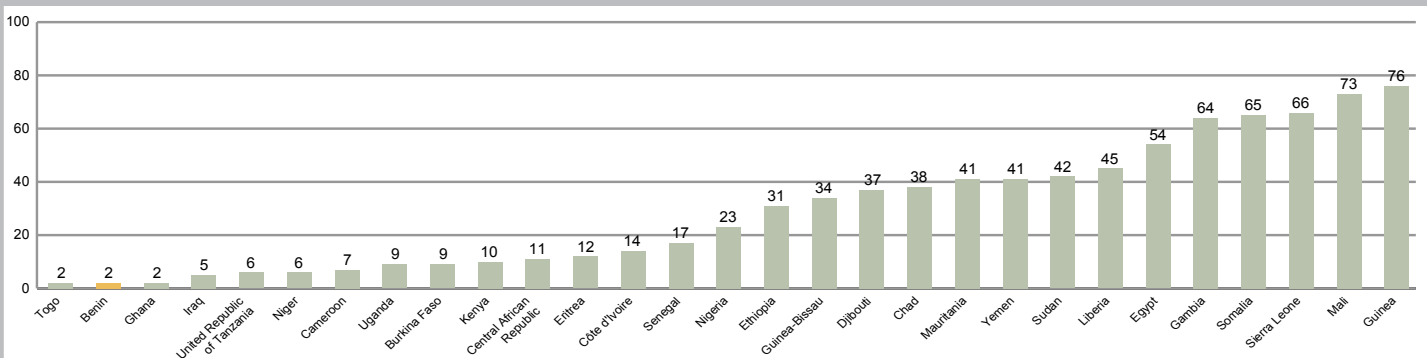
Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C



Percentage of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C (as reported by their mothers)



Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue



Notes: Data on attitudes for Yemen refer to ever-married girls and women. In Liberia, girls and women who have heard of the Sande society were asked whether they were members; this provides indirect information on FGM/C since it is performed during initiation into the society. Egypt data refer to girls aged 0-17 years who have undergone FGM/C. Data on attitudes for Ghana are from MICS 2006 and for Sierra Leone from DHS 2008 as data from the most recently available MICS surveys are not comparable. In Liberia, only cut girls and women were asked about their attitudes towards FGM/C; since girls and women from practising communities are more likely to support the practice, the level of support in this country as captured by the DHS 2007 is higher than would be anticipated had all girls and women been asked their opinion.

Sources: DHS, MICS, National Social Protection Monitoring Survey, Population and Health Survey, SHHS and Welfare Monitoring Survey, 1997-2013

Updated July 2014



These country profiles were made possible through core funding to UNICEF and financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of these country profiles are the sole responsibility of UNICEF and can in no way reflect the views of the European Union.

The Data and Analytics Section gratefully acknowledges inputs shared by UNICEF country offices.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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