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.”¹ 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.


Source: DHS/MICS 2010-2011 and Continuous DHS 2014
HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE PRACTICE?
Variations in FGM/C prevalence across Senegal are dramatic

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

- Less than 10%
- 10% - 25%
- 26% - 50%
- 51% - 80%
- Above 80%

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

- Total
- Ethnic group with highest prevalence
- Ethnic group with lowest prevalence
- Animist
- Muslim
- Christian

Percentage of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C, by residence, mother's education and wealth quintile

- Total
- Rural
- Urban
- No education
- Primary complete
- Secondary or higher
- Poorest
- Richest

Percentage distribution of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C (as reported by their mothers) by age at which cutting occurred

- 0-4 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15+ years
- Don't know/ Missing

Source: DHS 2005

Percentage distribution of girls aged 0 to 14 years who have undergone FGM/C (as reported by their mothers), according to the type of person/practitioner performing the procedure

- Traditional practitioner
- Don't know/ Missing
- Sewn closed
- Other type
- Type not determined/ Not sure/ Don't know

Source for all charts on this page: Continuous DHS 2014, unless otherwise noted

WHEN AND HOW IS FGM/C PERFORMED?

All girls in Senegal who have undergone FGM/C were cut by a traditional practitioner

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 this age group. Data on the prevalence of FGM/C among daughters of mothers who are unsure about the continuation of the practice is based on 25-49 unweighted cases. 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. 'Traditional practitioner' includes traditional circumcisers, traditional birth attendants, traditional midwives and other types of traditional practitioners.
WHAT ARE THE PREVAILING ATTITUDES TOWARDS FGM/C?

The majority of people in Senegal think that FGM/C should stop

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:

- **Think FGM/C should continue**: Girls and women: 16%, Boys and men: 12%
- **Think FGM/C should stop**: Girls and women: 81%, Boys and men: 79%
- **Say it depends/are not sure**: Girls and women: 3%, Boys and men: 9%

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:

- **Ethnic group with highest support**: Girls and women: 15%, Boys and men: 13%
- **Ethnic group with lowest support**: Girls and women: 1%, Boys and men: 12%

IS THE PRACTICE OF FGM/C CHANGING?

There has been no significant change in the prevalence of FGM/C or attitudes towards the practice over time

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

- **Age Group**: 15-19 years: 26%, 20-24 years: 27%, 25-29 years: 25%, 30-34 years: 28%, 35-39 years: 28%, 40-44 years: 28%, 45-49 years: 22%

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, by survey year:

- **Prevalence of FGM/C**
  - DHS 2005: 28%
  - DHS/MICS 2010-2011: 20%
  - Continuous DHS 2014: 25%

- **Think FGM/C should continue**
  - DHS 2005: 18%
  - DHS/MICS 2010-2011: 17%
  - Continuous DHS 2014: 16%

Source for all of the above charts: Continuous DHS 2014, unless otherwise noted.
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 aged 0 to 14 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue

Notes: Egypt data refer to girls aged 1-14 years and Indonesia data refer to girls aged 0-11 years. An older source is used to report on the prevalence of FGM/C among girls aged 0-14 years for Gambia (MICS 2010) since the latest source did not collect these data. MICS data for Ghana (2011) could not be used to report on attitudes towards FGM/C due to the fact that information is missing for girls and women with no living daughters; data from MICS 2006 are used instead. 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 2013 DHS is higher than would be expected had all girls and women been asked their opinion. Prevalence data on FGM/C for girls and women aged 15-49 years and data on attitudes towards FGM/C are not available for Indonesia.