

The perception of african immigrant women living in spain regarding the persistence of fgm

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Abstract

Approximately 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) worldwide. Migration has spread the practice of FGM around the world, thus making it a global public health issue. The objective of this descriptive qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of Sub-Saharan immigrant women in Spain in relation to the causes of the persistence of FGM. In-depth interviews were carried out with 13 female FGM survivors of African origin, followed by inductive data analysis using ATLAS.ti software. Two main themes emerged from the analysis: (1) A family ritual symbolic of purification and (2) a system of false beliefs and deception in favour of FGM. The FGM survivors living in Europe are aware that FGM is a practice that violates human rights yet persists due to a system of false beliefs rooted in family traditions and deception that hides the reality of FGM from young girls or forces them to undergo the practice. The ritualistic nature of FGM and the threat of social exclusion faced by women who have not had it performed on them contributes to its persistence nowadays. © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

Author keywords

Female circumcision; Public health; Qualitative research; Violence; Women