
Standard of Practice: Female Genital Mutilation

Standard of Practice

Naturopathic doctors are prohibited from procuring or performing female genital mutilation and must be knowledgeable of when to report a colleague or another regulated health professional.

Introduction

In accordance with *Bill 10: Health Professions (Protecting Women and Girls) Amendment Act, 2022* (Bill 10), this standard of practice refers to female genital mutilation, as it relates to a naturopathic doctor's practice. In 1997, female genital mutilation was added to Canada's Criminal Code under Section 268, in the form of "aggravated assault". This amendment act specifically addresses female genital mutilation.

Female genital mutilation is recognized internationally¹ as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against girls and women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person's rights to health, security, and physical integrity; the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment; and the right to life, in instances when the procedure results in death.

Female genital mutilation is often referred to as female genital cutting as it is perceived to be less judgemental, value-laden and can potentially lead to helping communities abandon these harmful practices. Female genital mutilation can also be referred to as female circumcision although this implies an incorrect parallel between female genital mutilation and male circumcision.

A naturopathic doctor will have their CNDA registration cancelled should they be convicted of procuring or performing female genital mutilation in Alberta or in another jurisdiction.

Definitions

Child in need: if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the survival, security or development of the child that is endangered in situations outlined in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act S.1(2)*

Colleague: another naturopathic doctor who is registered with the CNDA.

Competence: the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment required to provide professional services, defined in the *Health Professions Act*.

Female genital mutilation: the excision, infibulation, or mutilation in whole or in part of the labia majora, labia minora, clitoral hood or clitoris of a person; except where valid consent is given for a surgical or other procedure performed by a regulated health professional for the person's physical health, normal reproductive function, or normal sexual appearance or function.

Procedures with valid consent from a person at least 18 years of age and where there is no bodily harm are also exempt. This includes all four types of female genital mutilation cited by the World Health Organization ⁱⁱ ⁱⁱⁱ.

Standard of Practice: an authoritative statement that describes a minimum required behaviour of every naturopathic doctor and is used to evaluate individual conduct. Naturopathic doctors should always strive to practice above the minimum standards. Performance below the minimum standard may result in disciplinary action.

Unprofessional conduct: as defined in the *Health Professions Act S.1 (pp)*

Naturopathic doctors demonstrate this standard of practice by:

1. refraining from procuring or performing female genital mutilation,
2. reporting to the CNDA Complaints Director if they have reasonable grounds to believe that colleague has procured or performed female genital mutilation,
3. reporting to the Complaints Director if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a regulated member of any College has procured or performed female genital mutilation, and
4. reporting in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Duty to Report** if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child in need is involved in the practice of female genital mutilation.

Expected Outcomes

Patients are satisfied that:

- Naturopathic doctors are prohibited from procuring or performing female genital mutilation, and
- Naturopathic doctors are knowledgeable about when to report a colleague or another regulated health professional has procured or performed female genital mutilation

Related Documents

Health Professions Act

Criminal Code

Bill 10: Health Professions (Protecting Women and Girls) Amendment Act, 2022 (Bill 10)

CNDA Code of Ethics

CNDA Standard of Practice: Duty to Report

ⁱ World Health Organization: Female genital mutilation. Fact Sheet No. 241, February 2012
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization: Female genital mutilation. Fact Sheet No. 241, February 2012
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

iii World Health Organization "Global strategy to stop health-care providers from performing female genital mutilation (aka WHO_RHR_10.9_eng_OPT.pdf)
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/70264/WHO_RHR_10.9_eng.pdf?sequence=1

