

## **Muslim Scholars' Call to End Female Genital Mutilation**

### The International Council of Nurses Commends Muslim Scholars' Call to End Female Genital Mutilation

Geneva, Switzerland, 29 November 2006 - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) applauds the call from Muslim scholars from around the world to ban female genital mutilation (FGM, sometimes referred to as female circumcision. The scholars, meeting at a specially convened conference in Cairo, Egypt, declared FGM an aggression against women that should be stopped, and urged governments to enforce existing laws against the practice. They stressed that Islam forbids inflicting harm on others, and that those who circumcise their daughters do exactly that.

"We commend the meeting of Muslim scholars for speaking out so clearly and forcibly against this practice. This is an issue for all nurses, as girls and women who have undergone FGM are likely to suffer physically, mentally and psychologically," stated ICN Chief Executive Officer, Judith Oulton. "Violence against women and girls in the form of female genital mutilation constitutes a violation of basic human rights."

"Traditional practices and rites of passage are important in all cultures. ICN encourages the promotion of those that are beneficial to the health and well-being of women and children and the replacement of harmful practices with those that celebrate life and the value of individuals," concluded Oulton.

The International Council of Nurses is unequivocal in its position of actively opposing FGM and any moves to 'medicalise' the practice - that is to perform the procedure in safe clinical conditions in order to reduce the health risks.

The World Health Organization estimates that between 100 to 140 million women and girls have suffered FGM throughout the world and each year a further 2 million girls are at risk of the practice.\* The effects and complications of FGM are wide ranging, and require skilled management by informed, knowledgeable and culturally sensitive nurses and other health care providers.

\* World health Organization, [www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact241.html](http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact241.html)  
<<http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact241.html>> , accessed March 2003

#### Editor's Note

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of 129 national nurses' associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses for nurses since 1899, ICN is the international voice of nursing and works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies

globally.

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