

Ritual genital cutting kills boy in Italy

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A two-year-old boy has died and his twin brother has been hospitalised after their genitals were cut for religious reasons at a migrant centre in Italy.

The boys were circumcised at the request of their mother, who wanted to mark Nigeria's Islamic traditions, according to local media reports.

An American man of Libyan origin has been charged with murder.

National Secular Society chief executive Stephen Evans said the death was "a reminder of the risks and harm associated with the ritual circumcision of baby boys".

The NSS [campaigns](#) for an end to non-consensual, non-therapeutic circumcision.

In recent years several other babies' deaths from circumcision have come to public attention. In 2010 a boy in Manchester [died](#) from circumcision wounds at the age of four weeks. A nurse was found guilty of manslaughter by gross negligence and [given](#) a suspended prison sentence.

In 2012 a boy from north London [bled to death](#) as a result of circumcision, as did a [baby](#) in the Canadian province of Ontario in 2013.

In 2009, 105 boys were treated at A&E at one hospital in Birmingham for complications after circumcisions. One per month had life-threatening injuries.

Traditional genital cutting ceremonies in sub-Saharan Africa are [thought](#) to have claimed hundreds of lives and hospitalised hundreds of thousands between 2008 and 2014 alone.

There is increasing medical scrutiny of the practice of male circumcision. In 2017 a Belgian federal government committee [ruled](#) against the circumcision of infant boys for reasons other than medical necessity.

In 2010 the Royal Dutch Medical Society (KNMG) [advised](#) doctors to discourage parents from having their sons circumcised, urging "a strong policy of deterrence". KNMG said any medical advantages of circumcision were significantly outnumbered by the risks and other disadvantages, such as the loss of up to 30% of erogenous tissue.

And in 2016 the Danish Medical Association said circumcision should only be performed with "informed consent".

Studies have shown that male circumcision [causes](#) excruciating pain for the boys involved. The procedure also causes bleeding and infections. Its long-term health complications can include scarring, denuding of the skin of the penis, urinary difficulties, erection problems and psychological problems.

In 2018 lawmakers in both [Denmark](#) and [Iceland](#) considered bills to outlaw the cutting of healthy children's genitals, but faced strong opposition from religious groups.

Forced genital cutting has also been criticised on children's rights grounds. Last year the Child Rights International Network (CRIN), an international advocacy organisation, [said](#) the practice "goes against medical ethics". CRIN called the ritual circumcision of infant males for non-medical reasons a "violation of bodily integrity" which "unnecessarily" exposes children to risks.

The local mayor in the Italian case, Antonino Lupi of the town of Monterondo, described the death as "an absurd tragedy".

Some local groups have claimed the death illustrates the need for public institutions to offer genital cutting services to parents in Italy.

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