

# Religious and cultural genital cutting challenged at NSS event

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Experts made the case for protecting all children from religious and cultural genital cutting at a recent National Secular Society online event.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June, representatives from the International NGO Council on Genital Autonomy (INGOCCA) led an online discussion on their [new report](#), supported by the NSS, which calls on the United Nations to take greater steps to eliminate all forms of non-consensual, non-therapeutic genital cutting.

Every year, millions of children are forcibly subjected to [permanent and painful cutting of their genitals](#) for religious or cultural reasons.

While increasing numbers of countries give girls legal protection from all forms of non-therapeutic genital cutting (female genital mutilation), not a single country affords similar protections to boys.

Secular Medical Forum chair Dr Antony Lempert and Canadian government medical adjudication consultant Kira Antinuk explained why forced genital cutting is a violation of children's fundamental rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and dispelled some of the myths surrounding FGM and male circumcision. They also shared ideas on what needs to happen to ensure all children, whatever their sex or cultural background, are given equal rights to make decisions about their bodies for themselves.

You can watch the video of the discussion [here](#).

## Speaker biographies

### **Dr Antony Lempert, Secular Medical Forum (Chair)**

Dr Antony Lempert is a partner in a rural GP practice on the Welsh/English border. Since 2008 he has coordinated and chaired the SMF which works to protect patients from the harm caused by the imposition on them of other people's personal beliefs. Dr Lempert is a British Medical Association representative, and chairs the Shropshire division of the BMA.

### **Kira Antinuk, RN BScN MN**

Kira Antinuk lives on Vancouver Island in Canada, where she works as a Medical Adjudication Consultant for the federal government. She also serves as the Executive Director of the Children's Health & Human Rights Partnership, a non-profit organisation of professionals in the fields of medicine, ethics, and law who are committed to ending non-therapeutic genital surgery on children in Canada.

*Special thanks to Richard Duncker, of Men Do Complain, for editing the video. Please support his work at [Men Do Complain](#) and his [Vimeo channel](#).*

*Image: [esudroff](#), [Pixabay](#).*

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