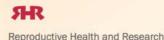
## Female Genital Mutilation and sexuality

## Sexual and reproductive health course – 2006 By: R. Elise B. Johansen



World Health Organization





## **Questions for research**

• Why do we need to know anything about the relationship between sexuality and FGM?

#### • What do we need to know?

- Cultural perceptions
- Personal experiences
- Physical consequences
- Psycho-sexual consequences

# How can we use this knowledge to support processes of abandonment?







## Areas of research

#### Sexual activity

- sexually activity, STI, fertility rate, marriage age.

#### Sexual desire – pleasure - satisfaction

- Female sexual pleasure; physical, cultural, psycho-social.
- Male sexual pleasure.
- Physical or cultural

#### Sexual control

- Is FGM a form of male sexual control? But when done by women?

#### Infibulation

defibulation – re-infibulation.







## **Sexual satisfaction**

- Sexual experiences of infibulated women
- More than 90% of infibulated women experience orgasm (Lightfoot-Klein 1989).
- More than 90% have no pleasure in sex (El-Deefrawi 2001; Hassan 2001).
- A review of literature on FGC concludes that the varying reports are sufficient to challenge the assumptions that capacity for sexual enjoyment is dependent on an intact clitoris and that orgasm is the principal measure of "healthy sexuality" (Obermeyer 1999).





Sexuality and sexual pleasure: Cultural - biological - psychological

#### Biology

 FGM remove clitoris – believed to reduce sexual pleasure & satisfaction

### Anthropology

- Significance of clitoris a western invention?
- Sexuality culturally construed
- Other erogenous zones compensates







## Man, 40

"FGC is bad because it removes the feelings from a woman. But at that time (as a young boy), we did not know about clitoris and lips and all that. We did not know that women had genitals as such or any sexual feelings. We just felt it (circumcision) was a simple solution to preserve their chastity."



Reproductive Health and Research

