Reviewer's report

Title: Female Genital Cutting (FGC) and the Ethics of Care: the need for cultural competency and community engagement at the interface of health and migration

Version: 3 Date: 18 November 2013

Reviewer: Dena Davis

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I think this is an important and well-written article. More subheadings would have made it easier to read.

My only major concern is some confusion about the article’s focus. It seems to claim a broad reach, including both women and children, those who have already experienced FGC and those who have not. And yet the actual discussion is almost entirely about women or older girls. If it is focused on adult women, or women and girls who have already experienced FGC, that needs to be said up front. But if the article seeks a broader view, then there are some glaring lacks, especially on the topic of children currently being born in immigrant communities in Canada. Does Canada owe these children an absolute commitment to protect their bodily integrity? How is that to be accomplished?

Minor Essential Revisions: I have also identified a few minor but important points that need to be cleared up:

P. 5 – Authors refer to “ritual nick” as a possible “harm” of criminalization. Is that what you meant? If so, I don’t think the references you cite support that view. You need to explain this further.

On the same page, it is not correct that the AAP policy “endorsed” pediatricians performing a ritual nick. The AAP would not and did not endorse pediatricians engaging in a criminal activity. Rather, that policy merely urged openness to the possibility, suggesting that the current law should perhaps be changed. (By the way, that policy remained in effect less than 48 hours, after which the Board of the AAP retracted it. The AAP currently has no policy on FGC.)

P. 6 – I think the Cologne court’s decision against male circumcision was overturned. Also, if you are going to note that Germany has laws about female cutting but not male cutting, you should probably note that the same situation exists in the US as well.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare I have no competing interests.