

*The vast majority of Egyptian women of reproductive age are circumcised, and many families are continuing to have their daughters circumcised. Efforts have expanded recently to change the attitudes that are supportive of the practice.*

### WHAT IS THE PREVALENCE OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION IN MENYA? (Table 10.1)

As is the case throughout Egypt, female circumcision is nearly universal among women in Menya; 96 percent of the EIDHS respondents from the governorate report that they were circumcised.

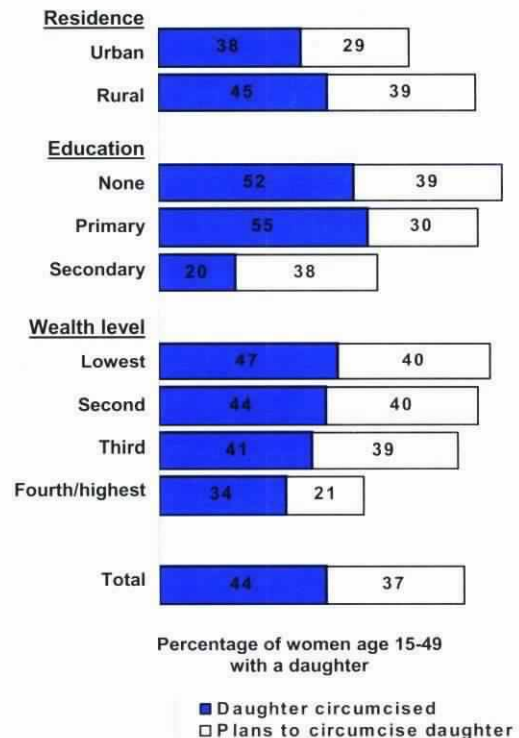
Although levels among women s daughters are lower than among women themselves, the EIDHS results indicate that circumcision continues to be widely practiced in Menya. Around 8 in 10 women with at least one daughter report that their daughter(s) has been circumcised or that they plan to have their daughter circumcised in the future. Circumcision levels among daughters are lower in urban families, families in which the mother is highly educated, and families ranked at the top of the wealth index than in other families. However, even among these groups, more than half of mothers indicate that their daughters are or will be circumcised.

The reasons that women in Menya give for not intending to have their daughter circumcised vary. Many of the mothers simply indicate that they do not believe in the practice. Roughly similar percentages of the mothers express concern about potential health complications (30 percent) or view the practice as against religion (28 percent). Other reasons that were mentioned less frequently include the belief that a girl who is not circumcised will have a better marriage prospect (5 percent) and that sexual relations with a woman who was not circumcised afforded greater pleasure for the husband (4 percent).

### ARE WOMEN S ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT CIRCUMCISION CHANGING? (Tables 10.2-10.4)

Ever-married women in Menya generally are supportive of female circumcision, with 74 percent saying the practice should continue. This is slightly higher than the level of support for the practice among women in Egypt as a whole (71 percent).

**The majority of women will continue the practice of circumcision for their daughters.**



It is not surprising that a large proportion of women in Menya feel that circumcision should be continued since they are more likely to see positive aspects of the practice than they are to be aware of its negative consequences. For example, 62 percent of women believe husbands prefer their wives to be circumcised, and 58 percent view circumcision as an important religious tradition.

| Indicator   | 1995 | 2000 | 2003 |
|---|------|------|------|
| % <sup>1</sup> whose daughters are/will be circumcised                  | 86   | 71   | 81   |
| % <sup>2</sup> saying the practice of circumcisor should continue       | 78   | 74   | 74   |
| % <sup>2</sup> agreeing that:   |      |      |      |
| Circumcision is an important part of religious tradition.               | 73   | 75   | 58   |
| A husband will prefer his wife to be circumcised.                       | 81   | 64   | 62   |
| Circumcision lessens sexual satisfaction for a couple.                  | 13   | 38   | 31   |
| Circumcision prevents adultery.   | 16   | 46   | 35   |
| Circumcision can cause severe complications, leading to a girl's death. | 13   | 13   | 25   |
| Circumcision may cause a woman to have problems in getting pregnant.    | 8    | 6    | 12   |
| Childbirth is more difficult for a woman who has been circumcised.      | 6    | 4    | 9    |

<sup>1</sup>Ever-married women with daughters  
<sup>2</sup>All ever-married women age 15-49

Women in Menya generally do not recognize adverse health effects from circumcision for women. One in four women agrees with the statement that circumcision can cause severe complications that may lead to a girl's death, 9 percent believe that childbirth is more difficult for circumcised women than for other women, and 12 percent think circumcision may cause infertility.

The EIDHS collected information about women's recent sources of information about circumcision. These data can help in deciding on approaches to use in communication programs trying to change women's attitudes about circumcision. Most women received information about female circumcision from broadcast media or through other channels during the year before the survey. Television was the most common source of information (74 percent) followed by radio (17 percent). More than half of the women had talked about the practice with their family or friends at some point during the year.