

CIRCUMCISION AND GENITAL HEALTH

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The value of Circumcision in the prevention of various Genital diseases is discussed.

Circumcision is of great value in preventing various conditions affecting the prepuce and glans penis. The prepuce can be involved in conditions such as syphilis, gonococcal infections, condyloma acuminata, herpes genitalis, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, genital scabies and malignancy. Many drug eruption can affect the prepuce.

Prepuce :

The prepuce is composed of skin and mucosa to cover the glans penis. It is supplied from the internal pudendal artery. Many genital diseases are seen among uncircumcised men. Many infectious agent can be carried on the prepuce. The removal of the prepuce as early as childhood can prevent many diseases.

Infections :

Gonococcal infection may cause prepuccial oedema and balanitis. Gonococcal endotoxin may act as an irritant⁽¹⁾. Papular, crusted, erythematous lesions are seen in Gonococcal balanitis⁽²⁾. Beta-haemolytic streptococcal infection can be acquired through sexual contact and may affect the genitalia, causing erythema and oedema of the prepuce and glans penis. The infection is acquired from the female genital tract.

Primary chancre caused by treponema pallidum causing an ulcer. It can affect inner surface of the prepuce and frenum. It is usually painless. It can also occur in many other sites, including extra geni-

tal areas. Chancroidal ulcers show predilection for uncircumcised men and is seen beneath the prepuce. It is a painful condition. The ulcer is irregular with undermined edges. Sometimes, Phymosis or Paraphymosis may be a characteristic feature of prepuccial ulcers.

Prepuccial ulcer is seen in Lymphogranuloma venereum caused by chlamydia trachomatis, serotypes L1, L2 & L3. The lesions may be herpetiform. Phymosis is seen in granuloma inguinale with genital oedema.

The mucosal surface of the prepuce and the glans are commonly involved in Herpes genitalis. There is a tendency for early lesions to appear in the frenal region, probably due to the possibility of trauma during sexual intercourse. Herpes genitalis is the only STD that has been proven to occur with increased frequency in uncircumcised men⁽³⁾. Condyloma acuminata due to human papiloma virus infection can affect the genitalia in sites like glans, coronal sulcus, prepuce and frenum. Prepuce can be affected by Molluscum contagiosum, with its umbilicated pearly white papules. Even though genital scabies usually affects shafts and serotum, it can affect prepuce. Tiny meatus cause ballooning of the prepuce during micturition, which may result in balanoposthitis and urinary tract infection.

Drug Eruption :

Many medications can affect genitalia involving prepuce resulting in a fixed drug eruption⁽⁴⁾.

Other Conditions :

Premalignant conditions such as erythroplasia of Querat is seen only in uncircumcised men⁽⁵⁾. Circumcision seems to protect against the development of Squamous cell carcinoma unless the circumcision was performed for penile disease⁽⁶⁾. Circumcision cures zoon's balanitis⁽⁷⁾.

Balanitis Zerotica Obliterans affects the prepuce in addition to the glans and periurethral region. Other conditions such as Psoriasis, Lichen planus, contact dermatitis may affect the glans and prepuce.

The relatively fragile skin of the glans penis is susceptible to the influence of exogenous agents, where an increased incidence of contact dermatitis is reported⁽⁸⁾. Most of the inflammatory dermatoses were seen among uncircumcised men. The presence of the foreskin may promote inflammation by Koebner Phenomenon, or the presence of

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infectious agents, may induce inflammation⁽⁸⁾. Conditions such as prepuce abscess and vitiligo also can occur on the prepuce. Those who are not circumcised in the neonatal period appears to be

inclined to develop inflammatory disease of the foreskin in adulthood⁽⁹⁾. Circumcision protects against or prevents infective agents, avoiding genital dermatoses.

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A message from Dr. Adel F. Matar, a Cardiac Surgeon in Portland Oregon, USA. He wrote the following:

Five surgeons are discussing who makes the best ... patients on the operating table-

The first surgeon says, "I like to see accountants on my operating table, because when you open them up, everything inside is numbered".

The second responds, "Yeah, but you should try electricians!

Everything inside them is color coded".

The third surgeon says, "No, I really think

librarians are the best;

Everything inside them is in alphabetical order". The fourth surgeon chimes in:

"You know, I like construction workers....

those guys always understand when you have a few parts left over at the end, and when the job takes longer than you said it would".

But the fifth surgeon shut them all up when he observed:

"You're all wrong.

Politicians are the easiest to operate on.

There's no guts, no heart and no spine,

And the head and butt are interchangeable".