OPINIONS ON THE CIRCUMCISEZION CAMPAIGN ROLLED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT

Is circumcision a viable way of combating the HIV/AIDS Pandemic? by Thengo Kavinya

Male circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin from the penis. It is primarily carried out for religious or cultural reasons and it provokes many arguments for and against the practice. The World Health Organisation recommended voluntary medical male circumcision as an additional important strategy for HIV prevention, particularly in settings with high HIV prevalence. The Malawi Government says it wants 80 percent of sexually active men to undergo circumcision with an aim of reducing the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS as well as sexually transmitted diseases. The circumcision campain will be rolled out in all government and Christian Health Association of Malawi CHAM hospitals and clinics. Mobile clinics will also be set up across the district to ensure accessibility to the service. The campaign hopes to circumcise more than 250,000 men by 2015.

As one of the countries hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, Malawi has been criticized for moving too slowly in introducing free male circumcision in state facilities. Results from three randomized clinical trials released in 2005 and 2006 provided compelling evidence that circumcision can reduce a man’s risk of HIV infection during heterosexual intercourse by as much as 60 percent. Meanwhile, Voluntary Male Medical Circumcision programme will be rolled throughout the country.

Southern Malawi, where most circumcisions take place, has a large migrant labour population and an HIV prevalence rate of about 18 percent, accounting for almost 70 percent of the country’s HIV infections, according to government figures. Circumcision is culturally less prominent in northern Malawi, where prevalence rates are also lower. So is circumcision truly a noble way of reducing the AIDS pandemic?

Andrew Kampingo
Accountant
The government should tell the nation the truth about how HIV/AIDS can be avoided. Telling the nation false lies of Genital mutilation just because they want donor funding will kill the God fearing Nation. How many were circumcised and were/are infected with HIV? Let’s be serious with what messages we convey to the Nation.

Chipiriro Kandonje
Clerk
How far has medical research proved this to be effective? How many circumcised men have died due to HIV-Aids? When will people know that the only reliable prevention to HIV-Aids is 100% abstinence? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Because some people have closed their ears to hearing surely they will die, circumcision wont help.

Austine Manda
Clinical Officer
I believe the ministry of health has moved into the right direction because according to facts Circumcision reduces the risk of developing a urinary tract infection (UTI), such as a bladder infection and that it reduces the risk of getting some types of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and also reduces the risk of developing cancer of the penis. Even though there are some other disadvantages such as reduced sensitivity in which circumcised men may experience less pleasure during sex but I believe its a right move.

Mary Mzumara
Nursing Student
Male circumcision provides only partial protection, and therefore should be only one element of a comprehensive HIV prevention package which includes: the provision of HIV testing and counseling services; treatment for sexually transmitted infections; the promotion of safer sex practices; the provision of male and female condoms and promotion of their correct and consistent use.

Gift Banda
Police Officer
I would want the government to give clear facts in regard of this issue. I for sure know that most Malawians will be excited with this and in the long run they will become unfaithful to their wives and get unprotected sex elsewhere resulting in the contraction of the HIV pandemic. The government should have communicated that this only.

References
1. http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Circumcision/Pages

Gift Banda
Police Officer
Records shows that those even circumcised are vulnerable. Its high time Government implemented the abstinence and not this campaign. This is like a person standing on a road and a cruising car is hooting for him to step aside so that he is not knocked down but he chooses to close his ears thinking that his inability to hear the hooter will stop the car.