The Women’s Health Needs Study (WHNS): Washington, D.C.®

The WHNS was a **one-time survey** that collected information on women’s health care experiences and needs, as well as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

The study took place from **November 2020** to **June 2021** in four metropolitan areas in the United States (Atlanta, Minneapolis, New York, and Washington, D.C.). The data below represent women surveyed in the **Washington, D.C.** metropolitan area.

### ELIGIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women ages 18 to 49</th>
<th>Born, or mother was born, in a country where FGM/C is common</th>
<th>Spoke one of the study languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29 years old</td>
<td>30-39 years old</td>
<td>40-49 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY

**252 WOMEN IN D.C.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>24%</th>
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<th>36%</th>
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<tr>
<td>18-29 years old</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF EDUCATION(^b)</th>
<th>24%</th>
<th>29%</th>
<th>44%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school/GED(^c) diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/Associate’s degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMMIGRATION GENERATION(^b)</th>
<th>88%</th>
<th>9%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Generation Immigrated to the U.S. at age 13 or older</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Generation Immigrated to the U.S. before age 13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MARRITAL STATUS</th>
<th>58%</th>
<th>19%</th>
<th>23%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married/Living with partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married/ Lived with partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) The study took place in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

\(^b\) Data for “Less than high school/GED diploma” and “2.0 Generation” responses are not shown due to small percentages or denominators.

\(^c\) General Education Development
ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**Health Insurance Coverage**

- **About half (45%)** had private insurance.

![Insurance Coverage Chart]

**Interpreter**

- **19%** prefer an interpreter when visiting their health care provider.

- Among women who prefer an interpreter, **over half (56%)** were offered one during their last visit.

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WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY

252 WOMEN IN D.C.

**Country of Origin**

- **Ethiopia**: 51%
- **Egypt**: 30%
- **Sudan**: 9%
- **West Africa**: 6%
- **No Insurance**: 18%
- **Medicaid**: 37%
- **Private**: 45%
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

78% of women reported having had a pelvic exam or Pap smear within the last 3 years; 18% never had an exam.6

51% of women reported having ever used birth control. 30% of women used birth control in the last 30 days.

55% of women who had a child reported ever having a C-section. 47% of births were delivered by C-section.

10% of women who reported ever having sexual intercourse were under 18 at age of first sexual intercourse; 63% were 18 to 24; and 26% were 25 or older.

FGM/C EXPERIENCE

The World Health Organization defines female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) as all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious, or other non-therapeutic reasons.1

More than 1 in 3 women reported experiencing FGM/C.

39% experienced FGM/C.

61% did not experience FGM/C.

6 Data for “4 or more years ago” responses are not shown due to small percentages or denominators.

EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN WITH FGM/C

BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The percentage of women from each country of origin who reported experiencing FGM/C:\(^b\):

- Sudan: 64%
- Eritrea: 58%
- Egypt: 35%
- Ethiopia: 29%

\(^b\) Data for Somalia and West African countries are not shown due to small percentages or denominators.

BY AGE

Women With FGM/C Within Age Groups

- Fewer than 1 in 10 (7%) of women ages 18-24 have experienced FGM/C.
- Over half (52%) of women ages 40-49 have experienced FGM/C.

Age at FGM/C Among Women With FGM/C \(^i\)

- Too young to remember: 10%
- <5 years old: 12%
- 5-9 years old: 46%
- 10-14 years old: 23%
- Don't know: 10%

\(^i\) Data for "≥15 years old" responses are not shown due to small percentages or denominators.

BY TYPE OF FGM/C \(^j\)

- 22% said their genital area was sewn closed.
- 72% said flesh was removed from their genital area.

\(^j\) Data for "Cut, no flesh removed" and "Don't know" responses are not shown due to small percentages or denominators.
46% reported a problem with childbirth compared to 23% of women without FGM/C. This includes postpartum bleeding, extensive vaginal tears from childbirth, or emergency C-section.

41% reported a reproductive health problem compared to 19% of women without FGM/C. This includes difficulty passing period blood, difficulty passing urine, pain with urination, or many urinary tract infections.

51% reported a sexual health problem compared to 18% of women without FGM/C. This includes pain or bleeding during sex.

31% reported feeling sad for many weeks at a time compared to 26% of women without FGM/C.

HEALTH CONCERNS OF WOMEN WITH FGM/C

Comfort of Women with FGM/C in Talking to Provider

47% would feel comfortable discussing their FGM/C with a health care provider.

25% have discussed their FGM/C with a health care provider.

FGM/C Attitudes

95% believe FGM/C should be stopped.

80% believe FGM/C can cause health problems later in life.

96% do not believe FGM/C is required by religion.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Frequencies in the study population are presented as unweighted counts and weighted percentages. Estimates less than 5% or with a denominator of 30 or fewer women are suppressed and represented by an asterisk (*).