

An Assessment of Radio-Based Education about Female Genital Cutting and Health and Human Rights Issues in Douentza, Mali

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Abstract : Introduction: After a multidisciplinary assessment of health and human rights issues in central Mali, a musical album was created in 2014 in Douentza, Mali to provide health information on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), malaria, HIV/AIDS, girls' education, breastfeeding, and sanitation. The objective of this study was to assess the impact of this album. Methods: A mixed-methods assessment was conducted with 149 individuals across 10 villages in Douentza Cercle. Analyses focused on the association of radio listening habits, age, sex, ethnicity and education with a public health knowledge score. Results: Over 90% of respondents reported daily radio listening, many listening five or more hours per day. Potential risks of FGM/C cited by participants included death (59%), difficulty in childbirth (48%), sterility (34%), and fistula (33%); when asked about their level of control over FGM/C, 28% stated they would never cut their daughters. Being a listener for 1-5 hours per day was associated with a 11.5% higher score of 'public health knowledge' compared to those listening only a little or not at all ($p < 0.01$). Education (marginal versus no formal education) was associated with 7.6% increased score ($p < 0.01$). Conclusion: Radio appears to be a significant part of community members' daily routines and may be a valuable medium for transmitting information, particularly for lower literacy individuals.

Keywords : female genital cutting, public health and social justice education, radio, Mali

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