

Sex as the Researcher Intended It
A critique of the 1999 O'Hara & O'Hara circumcision study

Footnotes

[1] K. O'Hara and J. O'Hara are identified as coauthors of the BJU International article. The title page of the book *Sex As Nature Intended It* identifies authors "Kristen O'Hara with Jeffrey O'Hara" (emphasis added), indicating that Kristen is primary author. The survey copyright lists only Kristen's name. In order to avoid a plethora of unwieldy plural pronouns, Kristen O'Hara is cited in the body of this paper as the author of all materials associated with the survey, article, and book. To the extent that Jeffrey O'Hara participated in the project, this critique applies to his contributions as well.

[2] O'Hara, K and O'Hara, J; "The effect of male circumcision on the sexual enjoyment of the female partner"; *BJU International*, January 1999. BJU International was formerly the *British Journal of Urology*. The article is accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Appendix_E_The_Effect_of_Male_Circumcision_on_the_Sexual_Enjoyment_of_the_Female_Partner.pdf

[3] O'Hara, Kristen with O'Hara, Jeffrey; *Sex As Nature Intended It*; Turning Point Publications; 2002; accessible at <http://sexasnatureintendedit.com>

[4] *The Seventh International Symposium on Human Rights and Modern Society*, April 6, 2002; program accessible at <http://www.nocirc.org/symposia/seventh/symposium.pdf>

[5] Guthmann, Edward; "A CUT BELOW, Uncovering the truth about women's pleasure"; *San Francisco Chronicle*; July 15, 2007; accessible at <http://www.sfgate.com/living/article/A-CUT-BELOW-Uncovering-the-truth-about-women-s-2552423.php>

[6] Dell 'Aquila Cannon, Lillian and Narvaez, Darcia; "Circumcision: Social, Sexual, Psychological Realities"; *Psychology Today*, 2011; accessible at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201109/circumcision-social-sexual-psychological-realities>

[7] O'Hara, "The effect of male circumcision"

"While this study shows clearly that women prefer the surgically unaltered penis, it does have shortcomings. The respondents were not selected randomly and several were recruited using a newsletter of an anti-circumcision organization ... In asking women to evaluate their experience based on all of their lifetime sexual partners, there may be an element of recall bias... Because the surveys were not completed 'face-to-face', not all questions were completed by all respondents. There were also several questions that were misunderstood by the respondents... Another weakness of the survey is its preoccupation with vaginal intercourse... It is important that these findings be confirmed by a prospective survey of a randomly selected population of women with experience with both types of men."

[8] Bohannon, John; "I Fooled Millions Into Thinking Chocolate Helps Weight Loss. Here's How.", *io9*, May 27, 2015; accessible at <http://io9.com/i-fooled-millions-into-thinking-chocolate-helps-weight-1707251800>

[9] O'Hara; *Sex As Nature Intended It*, pp 189-200; accessible at http://www.sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_11_My_Personal_Story.pdf

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- [10] Ibid, p 239; accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_13_Survey_of_Women_Sexually_Experienced_Results.pdf
- [11] O'Hara, Kristen; emails to Andrew Gross; March 2, 2015
- [12] O'Hara; "The effect of male circumcision."
"A total of 139 out of the 284 surveys mailed out were returned, 138 of which were analyzed. One survey was excluded from the analysis because the respondent considered a man who was attempting to restore his foreskin as having a foreskin."
- [13] "How Are Polls Conducted?"; The Gallup Organization; 2010; accessible at <http://www.meridian.wednet.edu/~dshick/stats/Gallup.pdf>
- [14] Margin of error was calculated using a population size of 100 million women, sample size of 138, and a confidence level of 95%. The calculator used is accessible at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/>
- [15] Stern, Mark Joseph; "How Circumcision Broke the Internet, A fringe group is drowning out any discussion of facts"; *Slate.com*; September 28, 2013; accessible at http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/medical_examiner/2013/09/intactivists_online_a_fringe_group_turned_the_internet_against_circumcision.html
- [16] Marcotte, Amanda; "A definitive list of the weirdest people on the internet"; *RawStory.com*; June 13, 2014; accessible at <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2014/06/a-definitive-ranking-of-the-weirdest-people-on-the-internet/>
- [17] Frisch, Morten et al, "Male circumcision and sexual function in men and women: a survey-based cross-sectional study in Denmark"; *Oxford University Press*, 2011; accessible at <http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/content/40/5/1367.full>
- [18] Risser, et al; "Self-Assessment of Circumcision Status by Adolescents"; *American Journal of Epidemiology*; 2004; accessible at <http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/159/11/1095.long>
- [19] See also Rob Hoskin; "The dangers of self-report"; *Science Brainwaves*; March 3, 2013; accessible at <http://www.sciencebrainwaves.com/uncategorized/the-dangers-of-self-report>
- [20] "Poll: 'Obamacare' vs. 'Affordable Care Act' "; *CNN.com*; September 27, 2013; accessible at <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2013/09/27/poll-obamacare-vs-affordable-care-act/>
- [21] Holbrook, Allyson; "Acquiescence Response Bias"; "Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods"; accessible at <http://www.srmo.sagepub.com/view/encyclopedia-of-survey-research-methods/n3.xml>
- [22] Survey questions are reproduced with the same spelling and capitalization as they appear on the SexAsNatureIntendedIt.com website. Survey questions are accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Appendix_F_Survey_Questionnaire_List_of_Questions.pdf

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[23] “Do You Prefer Circumcised or Uncircumcised?”; Adam&Eve.com; February 20, 2014; accessible at <http://www.adameve.com/pressroom.aspx?id=doyoupreferfebruary>

[24] O’Hara; *Sex As Nature Intended It*, pp 269-279; accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_13_Survey_of_Women_Sexually_Experienced_Results.pdf

[25] Laumann, et al; “Circumcision in the United States. Prevalence, prophylactic effects, and sexual practice”; JAMA; 1997; accessible at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9091693>

[26] O’Hara, *Sex as Nature Intended It*, p 252; accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_13_Survey_of_Women_Sexually_Experienced_Results.pdf

“Though the popular press indicates that many women persist in wanting vaginal orgasms, some women indicated that they prefer other types, manual or oral. This is perfectly acceptable, of course, but how much is this influenced by the poor rate of vaginal-orgasmic success they had with their circumcised partners? If these women were conditioned to go for other types of orgasms due to their poor success rates with circumcised partners, this may carry over into subsequent sexual encounters. Of interest is the strong preference women who preferred vaginal orgasms had for natural partners.”

[27] Saletan, William; “The Ass Man Cometh: Experimentation, orgasms, and the rise of anal sex”; *Slate.com*; October 5, 2010; accessible at http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2010/10/the_ass_man_cometh.html

[28] Saletan, William; “The Riddle of the Sphincter: Why do women who have anal sex get more orgasms?”; *Slate.com*; October 11, 2010; accessible at http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2010/10/the_riddle_of_the_sphincter.html

[29] O’Hara; *Sex As Nature Intended It*, pp 258-259, accessible at http://www.sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_13A_Survey_Results_in_Detail.pdf

[30] Ibid, p 103; accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_07_Women_Tell_Their_Personal_Stories.pdf

[31] O’Dell, John; “Firestone, Ford May Face Wider Recall on Tires”; *Los Angeles Times*; August 12, 2000; accessible at <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/aug/12/news/mn-3334>

[32] O’Hara; *Sex As Nature Intended It*, p 267; accessible at http://sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_13_Survey_of_Women_Sexually_Experienced_Results.pdf

[33] Bossio, Jennifer A. et al, “You either have it or you don’t; The impact of male circumcision status on sexual partners”; *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*; July 9, 2015; accessible at http://www.researchgate.net/publication/279958426_You_either_have_it_or_you_don't_The_impact_of_male_circumcision_status_on_sexual_partners

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The Queen's study also surveyed men about their circumcision preferences for a male partner.

[34] Bossio, Jennifer and Brousseau, Eric; "Studying neonatal circumcision and its effect on the sexual health of adult men and their sexual partners"; *Queen's University Department of Psychology* June 2014 newsletter; accessible at

[http://www.queensu.ca/psychology/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.psycwww/files/files/Other/46 Jennifer Bossio May 30 2014.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/psychology/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.psycwww/files/files/Other/46_Jennifer_Bossio_May_30_2014.pdf)

[35] O'Hara; *Sex As Nature Intended It*, p 1; accessible at

http://www.sexasnatureintendedit.com/eBook/Chapter_01_Secret_Enters_the_Spotlight.pdf

[36] Owings, Maria; "Trends in Circumcision for Male Newborns in U.S. Hospitals: 1979-2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; August 2013; accessible at

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/circumcision_2013/circumcision_2013.htm

[37] In the *BJU International* article O'Hara acknowledged that "the brain is often cited as the primary sexual 'organ.'" But she failed to explore the implications of that observation, instead assuming that circumcision interferes with the pleasure sensations that are sent to the brain.

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Appendix A: Women's Comments compiled via Facebook

These candid comments were posted on Facebook by women whose experiences offer a marked contrast from the participants in the O'Hara study. Comments are unedited, except to remove names; spelling and abbreviations are unchanged. Each comment is included here with the permission of the writer.

Uncut feels like a spear stabbing me. Plus I've been with larger than average men (8+ inches) – both cut and uncut – and the ones that were cut were pleasurable. The uncut man felt like he was assaulting my cervix because he couldn't tell when to stop pushing in.

I've had experiences with both and uncut is no better. The man I am with now and have been with for about two years is circumcised and the best that I have had. Cut/uncut doesn't matter. You both just have to know what you're doing and be willing to please each other.

Being with an uncircumcised man was uncomfortable. Being with a circumcised man it was easier; his "head" rubs against my g spot better... The foreskin is useless to me.

I don't think there is a difference honestly. I have been with someone that was circumcised and married to someone that is uncircumcised. In my personal opinion whether they are circumcised or not did not and does not make a difference.

Had both and prefer circumcised

I prefer circumcised, it's better to look at and DEFINITELY smells better most of the time. The few uncirc'd I've been around usually had an odd odor to them.

I've been with both, has nothing to do with a piece of skin to me, its all on technique lol. The uncircumcised guy I was with didn't matter how much he showered he tasted like urine and left a bad taste in my mouth had to brush my teeth right after lol. Needless to say I did not like going down there.

I have been with both, still prefer circumcised men, they perform better and it's more attractive to me to see a penis circumcised not fully erected than a penis that has been not circumcised... but being with a guy circumcised it's definitely sexier and turns me on a lot more.

My husband used to be uncircumcised and got circumcised after our marriage. We both agree everything is much better after!!

I don't like the appearance of uncircumcised, plus just knowing now what I know health wise I wouldn't want uncircumcised.

I was with one guy once who was uncirc'd and I agree about the odor for sure. No matter how much he showered there was still an odor, it was so odd! And sexually I found a circumcised man far more sexually pleasurable and Sorry to say but more appealing to look at as well. There's a difference for sure, that's why I've only been with one lol! Not my preference to ever try to be with a uncirc'd guy again, I VERY

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much enjoy sex, I need it as I have an addiction so I will stick to my circumcised husband and the AMAZING sex that comes with him and his circumcised penis lol!

Uncirc'd is gross. Dated a guy with one and it was the worst experience ever. This might be tmi but I enjoy certain aspects of pleasing a man and well a mouth full of extra skin makes me want to throw up... That relationship didn't last long.

My ex was uncircumcised and it was the worst sex ever ... hence the "ex" part of that sentence. I don't know what was worse, but combined it was just horrible: premature ejaculation, the look of it, the smell of it or the fact that after intercourse with him it burned when I pee'd. I have never had that with a circumcised man. I will never have sex with an uncut man again.

I've been with both & prefer circumcised. My ex fiancé had a hard time with his foreskin. Infection after infection, tear after tear. Boy, did he suffer & I felt awful for him & the UTI's & yeast infections sucked for me. This was also when we learned that Irish spring soap is the absolute worst soap to wash your penis with, it just intensifies that off smell that was there to begin with & no matter how many times he showered - the smell remained until he learned not to use the Irish spring. I've actually read quite a bit about that lingering smell & a lot of men have this issue & are completely embarrassed by it & struggle asking for a medical opinion. I wish it wasn't that way for them. My SO is circ'd & never has any issues. No infections, smells, no pre-mature ejaculation, no lube issues. I rarely get infections anymore - so that's a plus. For me his circ'd penis is perfectly perfect.

My husband is intact. Not only is hygiene useless (it smells after fifteen minutes) but sex isn't even enjoyable because it takes forever to get him where he needs to be because of that stupid extra skin covering the sensitive areas.

been married to both and prefer circ - both due to hygiene and the uncirc seemed to end up having arousal problems after less than a year and they stayed (and he was 1st husband so we were married back when I was 17 and him 20 so nothing to do with low testosterone or age)

My first partner was not circumcised and I had no idea that it was even a thing to not circumcise your baby's at birth. I was also his first time and we were about clumsy in the beginning. However, we started with oral which honest to god smelt and tastes terrible. When I pulled back the foreskin-which he told me I had to do so he could feel-I nearly vomited. When we had sex it hurt and I bled and cried-this was after the first time. Anytime we had sex it was so painful and was done once he had "pumped" three times. Every time. We ended up breaking up, and I started dating someone else. He was circumcised. He was confident and not clumsy and it has never, in the three years and two pregnancies we've had together, ever hurt. He can take his time and he doesn't need to pound over and over again. There has never been pain or bleeding. And it is the best sex I've ever had-every time. I prefer circumcised partners.

I'm sorry, there's just no difference sexually. None at all. Uncircumcised is just.. Well, I won't go down on them. Had a bad experience a couple times and the extra skin just.. A bad taste in my mouth.

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I've been with a total of 14 men during the course of my sex life (yes, I was probably a bit promiscuous in my single days.) Out of these, 11 were circumcised and 3 were uncircumcised. In terms of how it "feels," there is NO difference between a circumcised and uncircumcised penis. NONE. They both feel exactly the same. For me, pleasure was derived from the individual's technique and had nothing to do with his circumcision status. Size of the penis didn't matter either. I've been with some men who were rather large, but the sex was lousy. Conversely, there was one particular male I was with who was very small down there and was absolutely AMAZING in bed. My only complaint I personally have with my partners who were uncircumcised is this: condom usage was VERY difficult. I found that during intercourse, one of us would have to physically hold the condom at the base of the penis to keep it from rolling off during sex. The problem is that the foreskin would either roll under the condom or bunch up at the end of it, which would cause the condom to roll right off unless someone was holding it on. I found this to be very frustrated because it took away from the sexual experience (I wanted his hands to be on ME and not holding the condom on!) I never had problems with condoms coming off any of my circumcised partners. In short, if someone is trying to be responsible and have safe sex, it's very difficult to do so with a partner who is not circumcised. Out of the three men who were not circumcised, there was one that I had sex with without a condom as we were in a long-term relationship. Again, NO difference in texture or feeling during intercourse. There is no magical gliding sensation with an uncircumcised penis...the "gliding" is something you get regardless of circumcision status. It has to do with how If he's doing his job right, there are no issues! Dryness only occurs when us ladies are not "warmed up" properly prior to intercourse.

As a woman who has experienced both, there is a HUGE difference. And I do think the circumcised penis is sexy and super hot!! But then I do like some good sex!! Lubrication is noooooo problem with a circ'd man. I'm going back over 20 years on this memory, but if I recall, when my ex was thrusting in and out, his penis would naturally go in and out of the foreskin which was securely planted in my vagina. Therefore you only get 1/2 the thrust sensation.

I have been with a Man before he was cut, and afterwards. My experience, he was a 'sprinter' before. Just ten to fifteen minutes and he was done. Though it was sort of more pleasurable -I think it was the action of the fore skin being pulled back and forth- it would end too soon. If I had been intimate with him just before realizing I had a yeast infection, he would have to take antibiotics with me. This is coz we'd noticed that tho he is by nature very clean so smegma n odour were never an issue, somehow, the candida remained in him and he would end up re infecting me! After he got Circ'd things were different in the sense that he lasts much longer, which was a good thing for me. He also says he too enjoys sex more now. Offcos with the added advantages of BJs on demand. The yeast re infection also stopped. He took about a month to heal. At 6wks, he was 100% okey.

Appendix B: Studies that cite the 1999 BJU International article

Male circumcision: pain, trauma, and psychosexual sequelae, Gregory J. Boyle, Ronald Goldman, J. Steven Svoboda, Ephrem Fernandez; *Bond University ePublications*, 2002

http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=hss_pubs

Concomitantly, O'Hara and O'Hara (1999) found that female partners reported significantly greater sexual pleasure from intercourse with genitally intact men as compared with circumcised men.

This result [that circumcised men have greater dissatisfaction with their sex lives] is consistent with the findings by Hammond (1997, 1999), and O'Hara and O'Hara (1999), that circumcision may impede psychosexual and emotional intimacy between partners.

Apart from reducing sexual sensation and pleasure (O'Hara & O'Hara, 1999 [other citations redacted]), circumcision also leads to changes in sexual practices.

Penile Sensitivity and Sexual Satisfaction after Circumcision: Are We Informing Men Correctly? S

Masooda et al; *Urologia Internationalis*, 2005

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16037710> (Abstract)

Circumcision affecting the sexual pleasure of the female partner has been studied by O'Hara and O'Hara. Their survey found that women preferred vaginal intercourse with an uncircumcised man.

HIV infection and circumcision: cutting through the hyperbole, Robert S Van Howe, J Steven Svoboda, Frederick M Hodges; *Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 2005

<http://www.cirp.org/library/disease/HIV/vanhowe2005a/>

The anatomical changes caused by circumcision may be responsible for ... coital techniques that make the experience less satisfactory for their female partners. (O'Hara footnote)

The carcinogenicity of smegma: debunking a myth, RS Van Howe, FM Hodges; *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology*, 2006

Smegma protects and lubricates the glans and inner lamella of the prepuce, facilitating erection, preputial eversion and penetration during sexual intercourse. This natural lubricant allows for prolonged intercourse and eliminates the need for artificial supplemental lubrication during normal coitus or masturbation. (O'Hara footnote)

(Note that O'Hara's poll neither measured nor studied the effect of smegma or lubrication.)

Fine-touch pressure thresholds in the adult penis, Morris L. Sorrells et al, *BJU International*, 2007

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17378847> (Abstract)

Whether the penis is circumcised or not might also affect coitus. For women, having a male partner with a foreskin increased the duration and comfort of coitus and increased the likelihood of achieving single and multiple orgasms. (O'Hara footnote)

Male circumcision and sexual function in men and women: a survey-based cross-sectional study in Denmark, Morten Frisch, et al, *Oxford University Press*, 2011

<http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/content/40/5/1367.full>

In another US survey, 139 women who had sexual experience with both circumcised and uncircumcised men reported that they more often achieved orgasm with an uncircumcised

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partner. However, because participants were recruited through an anti-circumcision newsletter, results should be viewed with skepticism [sic].

Appendix C: Articles that cite the O'Hara study

A Cut Below: Uncovering the truth about women's pleasure, Edward Gutthmann, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2007

<http://www.sfgate.com/living/article/A-CUT-BELOW-Uncovering-the-truth-about-women-s-2552423.php>

For her book, O'Hara surveyed 139 women, drawn through classified ads in various publications. By a margin of 9 to 1, she says, they preferred the natural penis over his maligned, circumcised cousin. When the man is cut, O'Hara found, women are "almost five times less likely to achieve vaginal orgasm." ... O'Hara says she never consulted physicians or sex therapists when researching her book.

Circumcision: Social, Sexual, Psychological Realities, Lillian Dell 'Aquila Cannon, Darcia Narvaez; *Psychology Today*, 2011

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201109/circumcision-social-sexual-psychological-realities>

Intact men tend to make shorter strokes that keep their bodies in contact with the clitoris more, thus aiding female orgasm (O'Hara 1999). On the other hand, the circumcised penis functions like a piston during intercourse - the head of the penis actually scrapes the lubrication out of the vagina with each stroke. As the man thrusts, his skin rubs against the vaginal entrance, causing discomfort, and sometimes pain (O'Hara 1999, Bensley 2001). Far from making sex better for women, circumcision decreases female satisfaction.

...

In a landmark study of US women, 85% who had experienced both circumcised and intact men preferred sex with intact men. Sex with a circumcised man was associated with pain, dryness and difficulty reaching orgasm (O'Hara 1999) ... Even when a woman said she preferred a circumcised partner, she had less dryness and discomfort with intact men (O'Hara 1999).

Appendix D: Anti-Circumcision websites that cite the O'Hara study

Circumcision Information and Resource Pages <http://www.cirp.org/library/anatomy/ohara/>

Doctors Opposing Circumcision <http://www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org/DOC/statement06.html>

Circumcision Resource Center <http://www.circumcision.org/studies.htm>

Dr Momma <http://www.drmomma.org/2009/10/improve-marital-sex-keep-foreskins.html>

National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers

<http://www.nocirc.org/legal/brief.php#n33>

National Organization to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males

<http://www.noharrrm.org/advantage.htm>