

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

by Andrew Gross

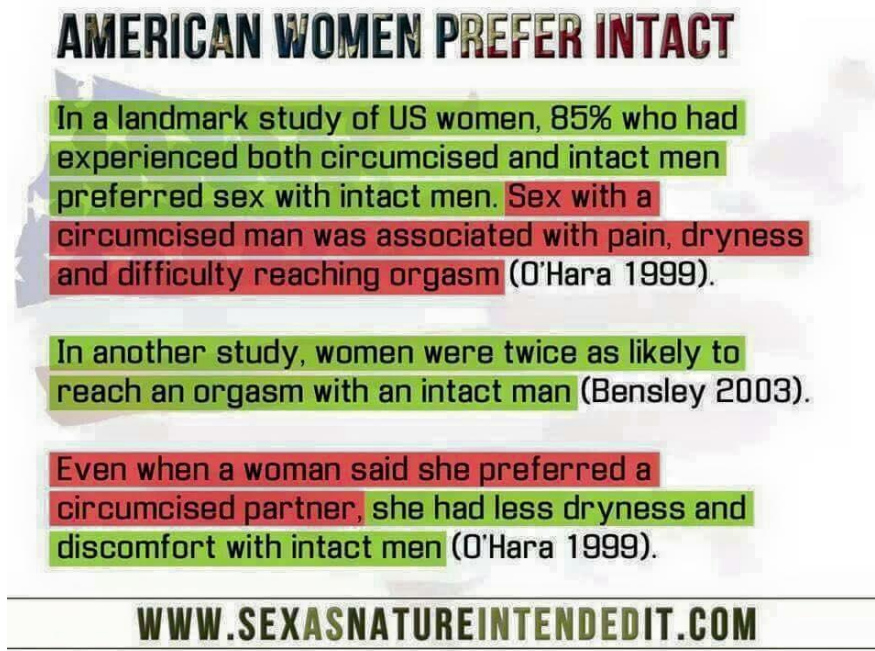
"It became apparent to me that if we had any hope of getting this topic out in the open, the only hope we had was in making this a women's issue." - Kristen O'Hara

In 1999 Kristen O'Hara ^[1] revealed the preliminary results of a survey she had conducted to compare the effect of circumcision on a partner's enjoyment of sexual intercourse. She breathlessly announced a startling result: 86% of the female participants preferred sex with an uncircumcised partner.

O'Hara reported the results of her study in a January 1999 article for *BJU International*. ^[2] The article was eagerly embraced by circumcision opponents as proof that most women prefer sex with an uncircumcised partner. Results of the survey were cited in other studies to show that circumcision adversely affects a woman's sexual experience and is harmful to sexual intimacy.

The survey formed the centerpiece for O'Hara's 2002 book, *Sex As Nature Intended It*. ^[3] She devoted one chapter to dissing the survey methodology, the results, and her conclusions; several other chapters included references to the survey.

Many have accepted her conclusions without question. O'Hara was invited to present her findings at a 2002 anti-circumcision conference. ^[4] She was interviewed for a 2007 *San Francisco Chronicle* article, ^[5] and a 2011 article in *Psychology Today* described the survey as "a landmark study." ^[6]



A graphic posted on Facebook

Despite the inclusion of a caveat that the study contained some methodological flaws and a caution that her findings should be confirmed by other researchers, ^[7] it doesn't appear that a review was conducted.

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And since medical journals have been known to publish junk articles with no scientific validity, ^[8] a single published study shouldn't be considered decisive in answering the question of how a man's circumcision status might affect his partner's sexual pleasure.

So is the study valid? Do women really prefer uncircumcised men? This paper will examine the survey methodology and the author's interpretations. This paper will demonstrate that the entire study is worthless, built on a foundation of quicksand. Every step of the survey process was hopelessly flawed: from the solicitation of respondents to the reliance on their ability to self-report, from the suggestive survey questions to an incomplete set of response options; from the failure to consider viable explanations to a singular focus on coital sex. Before and during the study the researcher assumed the conclusion she was trying to prove.

Background

In her book Kristen O'Hara described her own sexual history in great detail. She reported that she had enjoyed sexual intercourse with uncircumcised men, but had less pleasure and more discomfort with circumcised partners. This dissatisfaction continued into her marital relations with her husband Jeffrey O'Hara, a relationship that she described as good but not great. After ten years of marriage she began to suffer significant post-coital vaginal discomfort.

At her urging Jeffrey O'Hara had his foreskin surgically restored. Kristen's vaginal pain gradually vanished and her sexual experiences with her husband began to yield the intense pleasure that rivaled her earlier experiences with uncircumcised partners. ^[9] She later explained, "That's when I realized that millions of women are having abnormal sex because of circumcision, and millions of women fake orgasm because of it." ^[5]

Survey of Women

In the early 1990's O'Hara developed a questionnaire designed to show that circumcision is the cause of women's sexual discomfort. She explained, "The purpose of the survey was to determine the impact circumcision ... has on the intercourse experience of the female partner." ^[10] In assuming that circumcision impacts a woman's sexual experience, she didn't consider the default possibility that circumcision *might not affect* a woman's enjoyment.

Placing an announcement in an anti-circumcision newsletter asking for women to participate in a study, O'Hara was rewarded with 64 completed surveys. She likely realized that the survey results would be dismissed based on a biased pool of respondents. So she sought to substantiate the results by moving the solicitation to mainstream newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately publishers for the *New York Times* and *USA Today* rejected the ad, ^[11] possibly due to its sexual nature.

She was forced to settle for ads in the personals section of her local newspaper and one in *Mother Jones* magazine. She explained to this author, "Since so few people read the classifieds, and since so few women would qualify and/or would want to take part, we only got one or two women answering every time we ran it, so it was a slow process." ^[11] Using this erratic and intermittent method, she compiled 74 completed surveys over the course of several years. Combining these responses with the 64 that she had received from the anti-circumcision newsletter produced a total of 138 responses to analyze. ^[12]

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Recruitment Flaws

A sufficient sample size is an important factor in determining how well a survey represents the population at large. The larger the sample size, the more confident a researcher can be that the results of her survey accurately reflect the views of the target population. The typical sample size of a Gallup poll of American adults is 1000. ^[13]

The O'Hara survey had just 138 people, less than 14% of the typical Gallup survey. A survey with a sample that size would have a margin of error of about 9% with 95% confidence. ^[14] That means that if O'Hara's respondents had been selected at random, one could be 95% confident that a survey of the population at large would result in a figure within 9% of the result of her survey.

But O'Hara's selection was not at all random.

Selection bias

A survey in which people select themselves to participate by responding to a request can result in bias to the extent that respondents who choose to participate are not representative of the entire target population.

The vast majority of Americans have little interest in the controversy over circumcision. In fact most people aren't even aware that there is a controversy in the first place. But many people who are opposed to circumcision are extremely interested in the matter. There are hundreds of anti-circumcision groups and online pages devoted to the topic. Anti-circumcision activists appear in protests, write letters for publication, and respond to any mention of circumcision on the internet. ^[15] ^[16] A circumcision survey that relies on self-selection is likely to include an over-representation of respondents with a negative view of circumcision.

In addition, any woman who did not read the selected publications where the ad was placed would have been excluded from the pool of potential respondents. No pollster would consider such a group to be an accurate representation of the general population of sexually active women.

The survey also suffered from a high non-response rate of 51.1%. A researcher may assume that those who didn't respond to a solicitation would have given the same answers as those who did respond. However the highly-motivated circumcision opponent will make a greater effort to have her responses counted than a less passionate respondent.

Another critical factor is that the first 64 of the 138 surveys were solicited via an announcement placed in an anti-circumcision newsletter. It can be assumed that respondents recruited from this ad already had a negative view of circumcision. A survey relying on such responses cannot possibly be considered scientifically valid. Based on the use of the anti-circumcision newsletter, one study that cited O'Hara's study cautioned that the results should be viewed with skepticism. ^[17]

Self-Reporting flaws

A mail-in survey would be unable to measure the accuracy of responses. As one attempts to recall events further back in time, the memory is increasingly unreliable. And yet each respondent was expected to remember and evaluate specific details about every sexual encounter in her life, many of which may have occurred decades earlier. It's questionable whether respondents, particularly those with numerous partners, would be able to remember their experiences with each one.

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O'Hara explained that in order to assist respondents in determining each partner's circumcision status, she provided drawings of circumcised and uncircumcised penises, both flaccid and erect. But a 2002 study of 1,508 adolescent boys showed that a male may not even be able to report accurately whether his own penis is circumcised. Prior to a medical examination male subjects were asked whether or not they were circumcised, or if they didn't know. Later, during the exam a clinician recorded each subject's actual status as fully circumcised, partially circumcised, or uncircumcised. The subjects who thought they knew their status were correct more than 90% of the time. Yet 23% of the fully circumcised and 31% of uncircumcised boys didn't know their status. Significantly, the 85 subjects (5.6%) who did not know were asked to identify their status from a picture of a circumcised penis and an uncircumcised penis. Just 82% of fully circumcised adolescents and 43% of uncircumcised adolescents were able to correctly identify their status. ^[18]

Presumably most of those boys were familiar with the appearance of their own genitals. By contrast, each woman in the O'Hara study was asked to recall the circumcision status of penises that she might have viewed decades earlier – possibly in dim light or darkness. The researcher had no way of determining the accuracy of these reports. ^[19]

Furthermore, a researcher conducting a survey by mail may not be able to clarify survey questions that a respondent doesn't understand. O'Hara admitted that she needed to reword some questions on later surveys "to make them more easily understood."

Internal Validity

Loaded terminology

One of the most prevalent flaws in the survey is the pervasive use of highly prejudicial terminology.

Pollsters have learned that the way a survey question is phrased can affect respondents' answers. A 2013 CNBC survey polled two different groups, referring to the same controversial health care law by different terms. According to the survey results, 37% of one group expressed opposition to "the Affordable Care Act." Opposition rose to 46% in the other group, which was asked their opinions of "Obamacare." A term associating the law with President Obama may have caused some respondents to give a different answer than they would have given if the law was identified by its less political title. ^[20]

Throughout the O'Hara survey, loaded terms led respondents toward a specific preference for the uncircumcised penis. Question 5 asks each respondent about her experience with "natural (i.e. uncircumcised) men." All subsequent questions refer to uncircumcised men as *natural men* and sex with uncircumcised men as *natural intercourse*. *Natural* is a loaded term; that which is "natural" is considered good. If uncircumcised is *natural*, then by contrast circumcised must be *unnatural*.

That O'Hara would use an unfamiliar and loaded term is perplexing – since she clearly knew that most women understood "uncircumcised." ^[11] ^[19] Even a term like "uncut" or "intact" wouldn't have conveyed such a judgmental connotation.

Acquiescence bias – or leading questions

Questions 28 and 30, in which the researcher unwittingly asked respondents to reflect her own sexual experiences, are particularly vulnerable to acquiescence bias, a "tendency for survey respondents to agree

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with statements regardless of their content.”^[21] Note that any dissent was discouraged, since only respondents who disagreed with these questions were asked to explain their answers.^[22]

28. Do you tend to agree or disagree with the following:

In general, intercourse with the CIRCUMCISED man is more rough – they tend to pound or bang away and the penis feels uncomfortably harder during intercourse thrusting.

In contrast, the NATURAL man has gentler and more sensual tender sexual movements, and the penis does not feel uncomfortably hard during intercourse thrusting.

Please circle AGREE if you tend to agree with this entire statement, or underline those parts you tend to agree with.

If you disagree with this entire statement, circle DISAGREE, and explain in what way your experiences differ.

30a. Do you tend to agree or disagree with the following: The NATURAL man’s pubic area stays in closer contact with the woman’s clitoral area during intercourse because he generally uses shorter strokes in his thrusting movements. He seems to gently “grind” or “jiggle” more, resulting in a pleasant pressuring of the woman’s clitoral area which gives her greater pleasure.

Please circle AGREE if you tend to agree with this entire statement, or underline those parts you tend to agree with.

If you disagree with this entire statement, circle DISAGREE and then explain in what way your experiences differ.

30b. On the other hand, the CIRCUMCISED man’s pubic area makes less contact with the woman’s clitoral area during intercourse because he seems to use longer strokes in his thrusting movements. These longer thrusts result in less physical contact between his pubic mound and the woman’s clitoral area.

Please circle AGREE if you tend to agree with this entire statement, or underline those parts you tend to agree with.

If you disagree with the statement, circle DISAGREE & explain why.

Sampling Validity

Several questions offered only a binary choice, forcing respondents to prefer one type of penis. Since the researcher developed the survey based on her assumption that circumcision must have a discernable impact on sexual pleasure, she failed to offer the perfectly reasonable options of “both” and “neither.”

31. During which type of sex – CIRCUMCISED or NATURAL – do YOU feel more relaxed, comfortable, and at ease?

circumcised_____ natural_____

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32. For YOU, regardless of your vaginal-orgasmic capabilities, which type of intercourse simply feels better during the overall experience?

circumcised____ natural____

43. Shipwrecked island question. When you get around to your first lovemaking encounter ... would you be wishing that [your companion] is CIRCUMCISED or NATURAL?

Please circle: Circumcised Natural

46. Which type of man are you presently with?

Circumcised____ Natural____

Choices for those who might answer “both,” “neither,” or “I am not presently in a monogamous relationship” were not offered.

How important is it to offer such choices? In a 2014 Adam & Eve.com survey asking women about their circumcision preferences, 33% of respondents expressed no preference. (And 54% of respondents preferred a circumcised partner, while just 3% preferred uncircumcised.) ^[23] Now it’s true that an online poll won’t provide scientifically verifiable results. But neither does a survey with blatantly unbalanced methodology.

Lacking, Leading, and Loaded

Question 22 featured a trifecta: a leading question, using loaded terminology, and a lack of viable options.

22. Are you aware that your natural intercourse experiences are somehow different from your circumcised intercourse experiences? YES NO

The question assumes that a woman’s experiences *must* differ. Even if she provided a negative answer, the question impresses the idea that such a difference is real and should be expected.

Confirmation of Bias?

Each question included a line to include comments. Some of the candid thoughts that women and their spouses added suggest that respondents were influenced by the survey itself. ^[24]

“I never made the connection between this feeling of hostility and circumcised sex until now. I can’t believe the BIG difference with a natural man.”

“I’m very surprised because I thought the gentleness had to do with the individual himself... but maybe not.”

“When falling in love and choosing a life partner, it never occurred to me to check the status of his penis first, but this survey has allowed me to see clearly that there are big differences and that I have strong feelings about my sexual experiences with each type.”

“In reading over the survey questionnaire you sent to my wife, I can see the probable truth in some of the statements. You are quite right in saying that in sexual intercourse, circumcised men are more rough and tend to pound or bang away, using long thrusts.”

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Preference for vanilla sex

The survey focused almost exclusively on vaginal intercourse. Questions 1-9 query women about their *sexual intercourse* experiences. Women who had oral or anal intercourse with some partners – but not vaginal intercourse – may have considered those experiences when answering these questions. However Questions 10-40 just ask about *vaginal intercourse*.

And the survey didn't assess the possible effect of circumcision on oral sex, anal sex, or manual stimulation – practices that can significantly enhance a woman's satisfaction, enjoyment, and sense of intimacy. Just one question referred to any practices besides coitus.

25. Of the following three types of orgasms, which do you prefer to receive from your partner, taking into consideration which gives you the greatest overall satisfaction (including buildup to orgasm.) Please rank them: 1 (favorite), 2 (second), 3 (third)
____ vaginal orgasm ____ orally-induced orgasm
____ hand-induced orgasm (no vibrator or mechanical device)

O'Hara didn't include the results of Question 25 in her article or book. But she cited a 1997 study which concluded that manual, oral, and anal sex are more common practices among circumcised men. ^[25] And she suggested that partners of circumcised men had a greater preference for such activities because they found vaginal intercourse unsatisfying. ^[26]

Such a conclusion conveys a bland, vanilla view of sex. O'Hara seems locked in a 1950's mentality in which penis-in-vagina is the only flavor on the menu. She didn't explore the possibility that a woman might prefer a circumcised partner for other activities. This author will suggest some possible reasons why some women might hold such preferences.

A woman may prefer **oral sex** with a circumcised partner if she finds his penis to be more visually pleasing. She may decline to perform fellatio on an uncircumcised penis if repulsed by an unpleasant odor. And she may be reluctant to insert an organ with germ-harboring foreskin into her mouth.

As sexual activity is typically reciprocal, a man who often *receives* oral sex may be more willing and enthusiastic to *perform*. Thus a woman who regularly provides fellatio (for her circumcised partner) might find herself the happy recipient of more oral stimulation. If she frequently climaxes via cunnilingus, she might not consider orgasm to be the singular goal of every vaginal intercourse session.

A woman may prefer a circumcised partner for **manual stimulation** if she considers his penis easier to handle. She may be averse to uncircumcised **anal intercourse** if she fears that the foreskin will tear or cause injury during insertion and thrusting.

Interestingly, the results of some studies seem to contradict O'Hara's assumptions about interest in alternative sex practices. According to a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, just 65% of surveyed women who had vaginal sex in their last encounter reached orgasm. Yet 81% of those who had oral sex and an incredible 94% of those who had anal sex achieved orgasm. A male writer for *Slate* expressed surprise that "anal sex outscores cunnilingus" in accompanying female orgasms. ^[27]

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Why would women who engage in anal sex have more orgasms? One might look at it the other way around. Achieving orgasm may increase a woman's interest in trying alternate activities. And while some women prefer a traditional position, others are simply more adventurous. ^[28]

This author doesn't suggest that these explanations, individually or collectively, explain the popularity of alternate sexual activities. Rather, it would be irresponsible for a researcher not to consider them.

Dismissal of Methodological Deficiencies

O'Hara interpreted the results of her survey in both the 1999 article and the 2002 book. In Chapter 13, when analyzing the survey results, she demonstrated a zealotry unsuitable for a scientific researcher. An unbiased researcher might be skeptical if 8 out of 9 survey respondents preferred one type of partner over the other. But not only was O'Hara unsurprised, she offered several reasons to dismiss the remaining 14% of women who preferred circumcised partners.

For instance, she noted that 7 of the 14 women who preferred circumcised sex had had sex with just one uncircumcised partner. O'Hara dismissed their insights, since they weren't based on a large sample, but on a single negative experience. She presumed that their opinions might be different if they had more uncircumcised partners. ^[29] Yet in Chapter 7 she trumpeted the opinion of a woman who ranked her one uncircumcised partner above three dozen other lovers. She asked, "Considering that this woman had intercourse with 38 circumcised men and only one natural man, what are the odds that out of 39 men, she found only one man to be superior and he just happened to be natural?" ^[30] Thus she *dismissed* a ranking that placed the one uncircumcised partner at the bottom of the list. But she *rejoiced* when a respondent ranked one uncircumcised partner at the top of the list.

O'Hara blamed the 14 uncooperative respondents for a lack of sensitivity and other supposed flaws. With no apparent sense of irony, she accused her respondents of harboring a prejudice against one type of penis. ^[29] This author finds it remarkable that a researcher would have such a low opinion of volunteers who donated their own time to complete a 40-question survey for her.

As noted earlier O'Hara recognized a few of the inherent weaknesses in her survey. ^[7] She admitted that

- Respondents were not selected randomly.
- Nearly half were recruited via an anti-circumcision newsletter.
- Recall bias may have affected the reliability of responses.
- Some respondents failed to answer every question.
- Some respondents misunderstood several questions.
- The survey measured only vaginal intercourse, and ignored other activities.

Rather than recognize that these flaws cast doubt on the validity of her conclusions, O'Hara tried to excuse or justify them. For instance, she compared the small sample size to a tire recall following a series of 100 fatal auto crashes. In fact the Firestone tire recall followed nearly 300 complaints of accidents. ^[31] And those who reported the auto accidents would have been representative of the driving population at large. Presumably motorists didn't hold an anti-Firestone bias prior to suffering a tire blowout accident, and they didn't suffer recall bias. Moreover, accident reports are not comparable to an opinion survey, much less one with such severe methodological flaws.

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Other deficiencies, such as the lack of a random sample, were also dismissed. O'Hara insisted, "While this study has some obvious methodological flaws, all the differences cannot be attributed to them." She preemptively dismissed skeptics as hardheaded and emotionally attached. ^[32]

O'Hara failed to consider the effect of penile length or girth on a partner's comfort, satisfaction, intimacy, and emotional bonding. She failed to consider the effect of condom usage. She didn't consider the history of sexually-transmitted infections among respondents and their partners. Nor did she consider the effect of age, race, ethnicity, physical build, or alcohol and drug use.

O'Hara admitted that she didn't consult a physician or sex therapist when researching her book. ^[5] It doesn't appear that she contacted a professional pollster or statistician. This dismissal of expert assistance was a serious mistake. Had she checked with such experts, she would have been alerted to various defects in her research and conclusions, and could have taken action to mitigate the damage.

A peek into a methodologically sound study

In July 2015 the Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality published a circumcision study conducted by researchers at Queen's University in Ontario. The authors stated that their survey "procedures were approved by the University's General Research Ethics Board." The survey used unbiased terms, referring to the uncircumcised penis as "intact." A total of 196 participants were recruited through print advertisements around the Queen's University campus and in online advertisements via social media.

The authors summarized their findings.

Circumcision status did not appear to impact sexual functioning for women... Women with intact partners reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Women with circumcised partners reported higher levels of satisfaction with their partner's circumcision status as compared to those with intact partners only when their partner's penis was flaccid... Despite differences in satisfaction across circumcision status, women...rated overall high levels of satisfaction with their partner's circumcision status and did not wish for it to change.

Referencing the O'Hara study, the researchers rejected her hypothesis that "sex with an intact penis would be more enjoyable for men's [female] sexual partners due to the mobility of the foreskin." ^[33]

Contrast the zeal displayed by O'Hara with Queen's researcher Jennifer Bossio's lack of bias. Bossio stated that she neither expected nor hoped for a particular outcome. Referring to a related study she was conducting to measure the effect of circumcision on penile sensitivity, she wrote modestly, "Regardless of what we find – whether circumcision decreases penile sensitivity, increases it, or has absolutely no difference – I hope that this research is used to make a difference in people's lives in some small way." ^[34]

Conclusion

The O'Hara study is instructive at showing the systemic failure that is likely to occur when a biased and amateur researcher conducts a study in order to advance an agenda.

Kristen O'Hara didn't seek to preach to the choir, but to convert a nation. She declared that her study provides "many astonishing and disconcerting revelations." ^[10] She asked, "Are these findings destined to

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change the sex life and sexual attitude of America's men and women forever?"^[35] She hoped that women would "confront this issue, acknowledge it, change our attitudes, embrace its truths, and get on with our lives, knowing that tomorrow's child will enter the world in a better way, and that humanity, and the world, will be a better place because of it."^[24]

With such a grandiose vision, O'Hara must be deeply disappointed that her study has garnered little attention outside of a close-knit community of anti-circumcision activists. It's true that some researchers have accepted the results without question. Perhaps they didn't have the time to review her study. Perhaps they were blinded by their own confirmation bias. At any rate her findings have made virtually no impact on the circumcision rate in the United States. (While the national rate of neonatal circumcision declined by 10% from 1979 to 2010, nearly all of the change was in the West, and coincided with a large influx of immigrants from non-circumcising cultures.)^[36]

The researcher explained that she would automatically dismiss the insights of those who might disagree with her findings. "My experience has taught me that there is a great deal of hardheadedness and emotionalism associated with the circumcision issue, particularly since many parents have circumcised their sons. And circumcised men, themselves, may have difficulty facing up to the idea that they could be deficient or inferior in their sexuality."^[32]

O'Hara unwittingly admitted to this author that she conducted her study, not to understand the effects of circumcision, but *to advance a personal crusade* to end circumcision. She wrote, "I have spoken and corresponded with many men over the years on the circumcision topic. The one thing I hear over and over again is, 'I'm circumcised and I'm fine.' So it became apparent that if we had any hope of getting this topic out in the open, the only hope we had was in making this a women's issue, since women would not have their sexual egos involved."^[11] In other words, too many nonchalant circumcised men refused to play their assigned part; she sought to bypass them and recruit women to assume the victim role.

O'Hara wrote candidly of the pain and discomfort she suffered with her own circumcised partners, in sharp contrast to the glowing terms she used to describe her experiences with uncircumcised men. She erroneously assumed that her sexual experiences are relevant to every other woman, when in fact her experiences apply only to herself. Each woman understands and achieves fulfillment through her own sexual explorations. O'Hara might be surprised to learn that many sexually-experienced women don't relate to her vision of painful unsatisfying sex.

Millions of women with circumcised partners routinely enjoy breathtaking encounters without pain, discomfort, or disappointment. These lovers cherish soft, tender, intimate, and sensuous rendezvous. Their own personal observations confirm a reality that no survey can obscure. An appendix to this paper provides a glimpse into the opinions of experienced women who offer decidedly positive reports of their circumcised sex experiences.

Sex therapist Dr. Ruth Westheimer has observed that the largest and most important sexual organ is not the one between our legs, but the one between our ears.^[37] The presence or absence of a flap of skin cannot prevent the human brain from transforming a routine sexual encounter into euphoric bliss.

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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

[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, it's 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% okay.

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.noharmmm.org/advantage.htm>