



Female Genital Mutilation Poll

February 2020



Female Genital Mutilation Poll

19% of Nigerians say that **Female Genital Mutilation** is prevalent in their locality

NW=25%
NE=8%
NC=7%

SW=14%
SE=33%
SS=27%

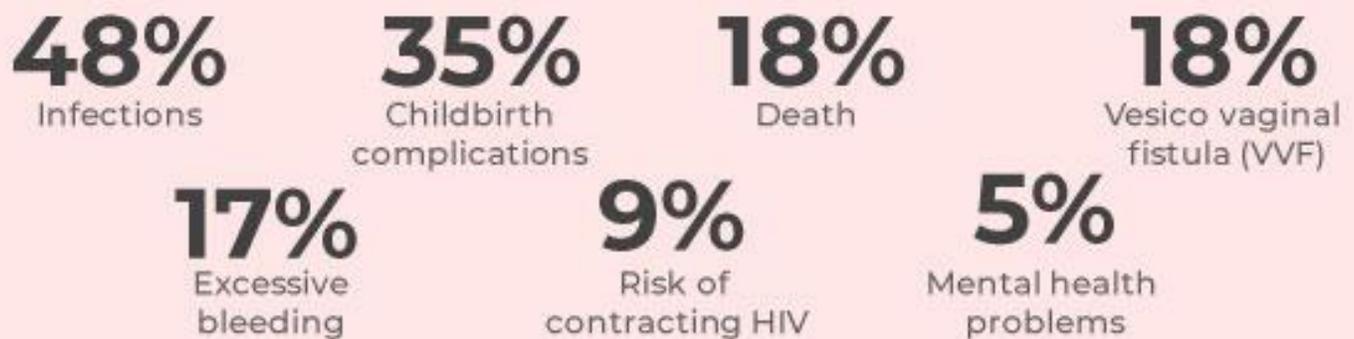
14% of Nigerians say they support **Female Genital Mutilation**, a 2% increase from **12%** in 2017



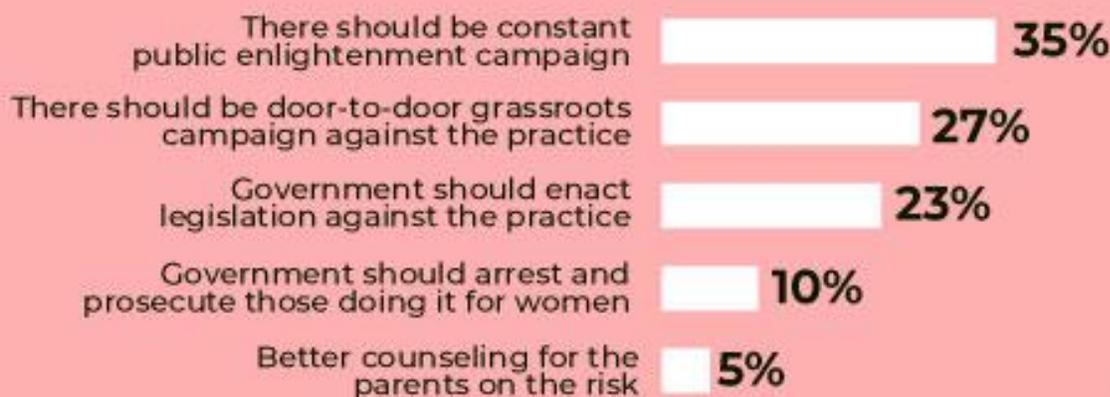
Reasons for supporting Female Genital Mutilation



what do you think are the health risks associated with Female Genital Mutilation?



In your opinion, how do you think this practice can be stopped?



Source: NOIPolls - February 2020

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION RESULT RELEASE

In Commemoration Of International Day Of Zero Tolerance For Female Genital Mutilation; Nigerians Supports Legislation To End The Practice

Abuja, Nigeria. February 4th, 2020 – NOIPolls joins the world in commemorating the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation which is observed on 6th February every year. Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women. According to report, about 200 million women and girls have been mutilated globally.¹ In Nigeria, about 20 million women and girls have been mutilated implying that 1 out of every 10 mutilated women in the world is Nigerian.² Given the above background, NOIPolls conducted a poll to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of Nigerians towards the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the country.

The poll revealed that that majority of adult Nigerians (88 percent) are willing to support a legislation to end female genital mutilation mainly due to the health complications associated with the practice. This is in line with the effort of the United Nations Population Fund which strives to fully eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation by 2030 as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which prohibit any form of harmful practices against people generally especially children and women.

Although the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) was passed into law in Nigeria in 2015 to criminalise FGM practice, lack of enforcement of the VAPP Act is an issue given that it has not been domesticated in states. Currently, 13 out of 36 states in Nigeria have their own individual state laws expressly prohibiting FGM/C. These states are Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Bayelsa, Ogun, Delta, Ebonyi, Oyo, Imo, Edo, Cross-River and Rivers however, the VAPP Act is actively enforced in only 3 out of the 36 states in Nigeria and also in the FCT; these 3 states are Anambra, Oyo and Ebonyi.³

Furthermore, perception on prevalence revealed that 19 percent of Nigerians disclosed that this practice is still prevalent in the country. At the zonal level, 33 percent of respondents in the South-East, 27 percent in the South-South and 25 percent in the North West reported the practice as prevalent in their locality. Significantly, during the course of the survey, our analysts interviewed a couple of respondents from the South-South zone who were planning imminent circumcision of their daughters but were dissuaded due to the survey enlightenment. Some respondents (mainly mothers) in the South East region personally revealed that they are continuing with the practice because they had no complications whatsoever when it was done to them while some respondents particularly from the South West divulged that tradition demands that they carry out the practice else they may be excommunicated in their community.

When asked of the health risks associated with FGM, most of the respondents cited infections (48 percent) and complications during childbirth (35 percent). This corroborates reports which has shown that girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections,

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/oct/11/fgm-nigeria-20-million-women-and-girls-undergone-female-genital-mutilation>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/oct/11/fgm-nigeria-20-million-women-and-girls-undergone-female-genital-mutilation>

³ <https://impakter.com/female-genital-mutilation-in-nigeria-combative-legislation-and-the-issues-impact-on-the-economic-growth-of-women/>

and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health. Therefore, there is urgent need to carry out public enlightenment campaign on the dangers linked with FGM as recommended by 62 percent of Nigerians. This can be achieved by a coordinated and systematic effort in engaging grassroot communities and focusing on human rights, gender equality, sexual education and attention to the needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences. It is also important that more states domesticate the VAPP act. These are some of the key findings from the Female Genital Mutilation poll conducted in the week commencing **27th January, 2020**.

Brief Background

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly designated this day as the international day of zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation with the aim to amplify and direct the efforts on the elimination of the practice. The UN has realized that ending female genital mutilation in one decade will require support from all and sundry. Hence, it has decided to invest in young people who are indispensable and valuable in this all-important task of eradicating Female Genital Mutilation. This is the main reason why the day focuses on mobilizing youths around the world to join in the campaign of ending the practice.

However, Female genital mutilation also known as female circumcision, a procedure done whereby parts of the female genitalia is being removed especially the external parts is still prevalent. This act is usually practiced in some parts of Africa, Middle East and Asia. There are many reasons why FGM is practiced in Nigeria, ranging from cultural reasons to its belief in curbing illicit sexual appetites of women and girls. However, FGM has a lot of negative effects such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health⁴.

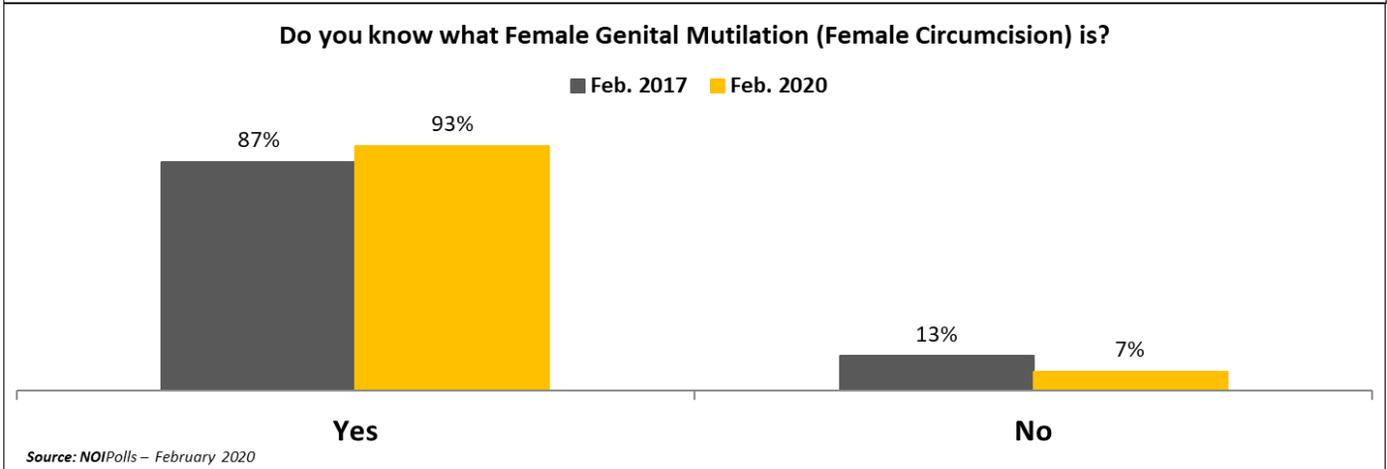
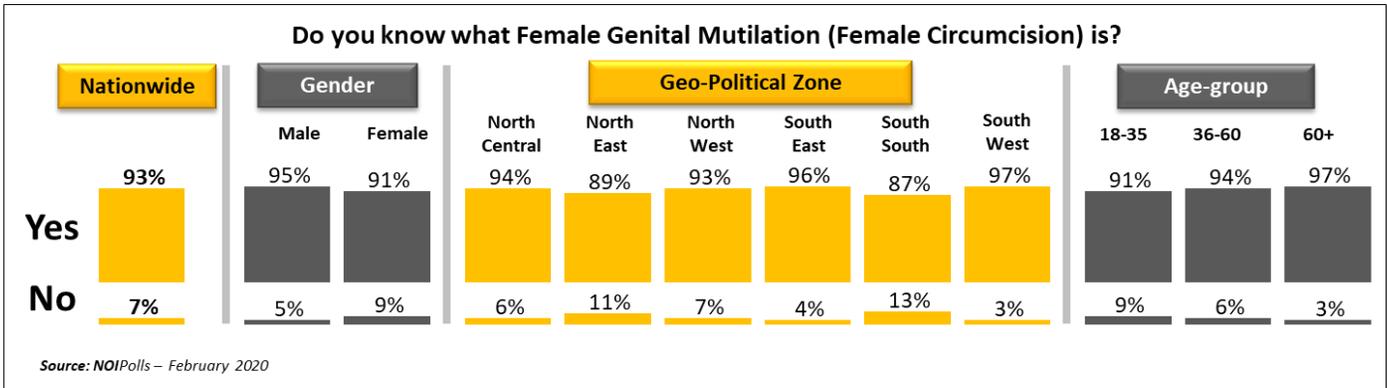
A lot of campaign has been done both locally and internationally to eradicate this practice by protecting the interest of the girl child, sensitizing parents and guardians on the dangers associated with Female genital mutilation. Against this backdrop, NOIPolls conducted its latest poll to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of Nigerians towards the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Survey Findings

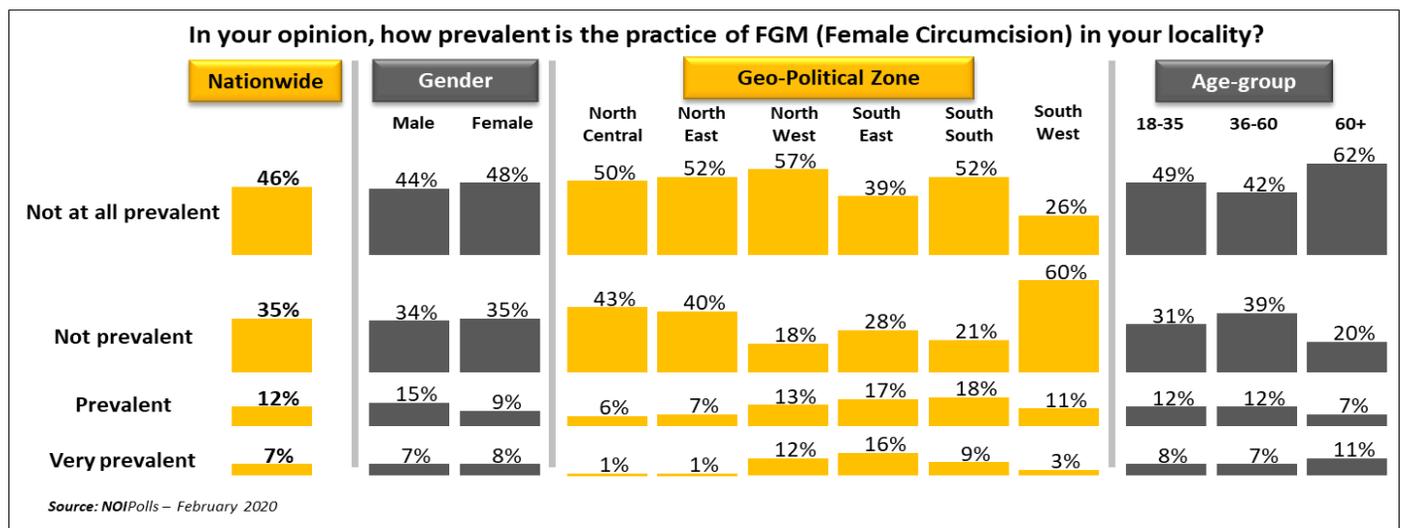
The first question gauged awareness and the poll result revealed that an overwhelming majority of Nigerians (93 percent) are aware of what Female Genital Mutilation is. This depicts the fact that there is adequate awareness of what Female genital mutilation is among Nigerians and this cuts across gender, geographical location and age-group with a minimum representation of 87 percent.

Trend analysis shows a 6 percent increase in the proportion of respondents who are aware of the Female Genital Mutilation as the level of awareness increased from 87 percent in 2017 to 93 percent in 2020.

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3507121/>



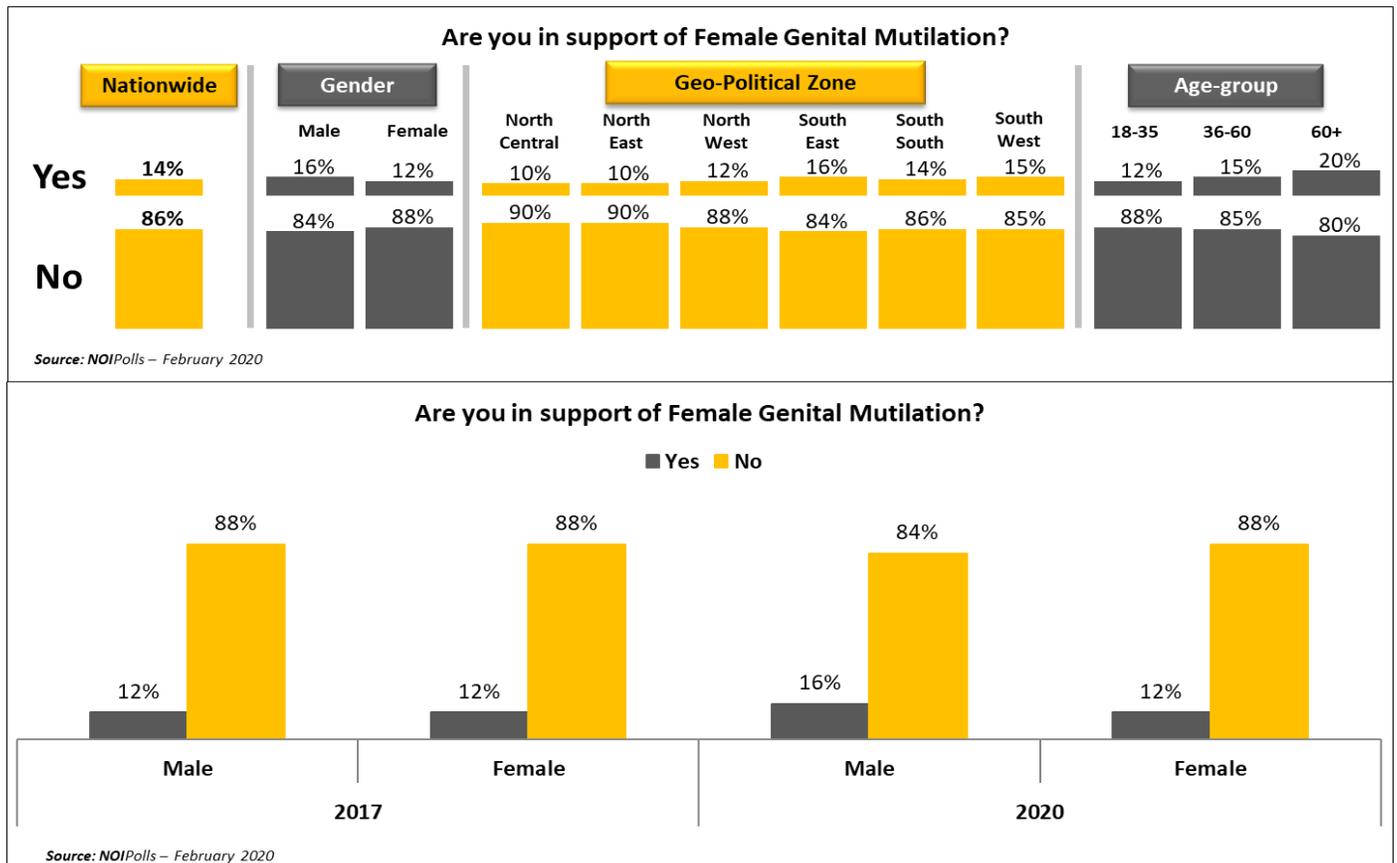
With regards to prevalence, the findings revealed that majority of adult Nigerians (81 percent) stated that Female Genital Mutilation is not prevalent in Nigeria. On the other hand, 19 percent of the respondent disclosed that FGM is prevalent in the country. Interestingly, analysis by gender showed that there are more male (22 percent) than female (17 percent) respondents who stated that FGM is prevalent while analysis by geographical location revealed that Nigerians residing in the South East region had more respondents (33 percent) in this category.



Subsequently, the poll gauged support of Nigerians for FGM and the findings showed that most Nigerians (86 percent) are not in support of the practice and this also cuts across gender, geographical locations and age-groups with a minimum representation of 80 percent. It is encouraging to note that a large proportion of Nigerians are not in support of FGM practice considering the danger it poses for people who indulge in the practice.

However, 14 percent expressed their support for the practice of FGM, particularly amongst respondents in some South East (16 percent) and South West (15 percent) region as well as older respondents aged 60 and above (20 percent).

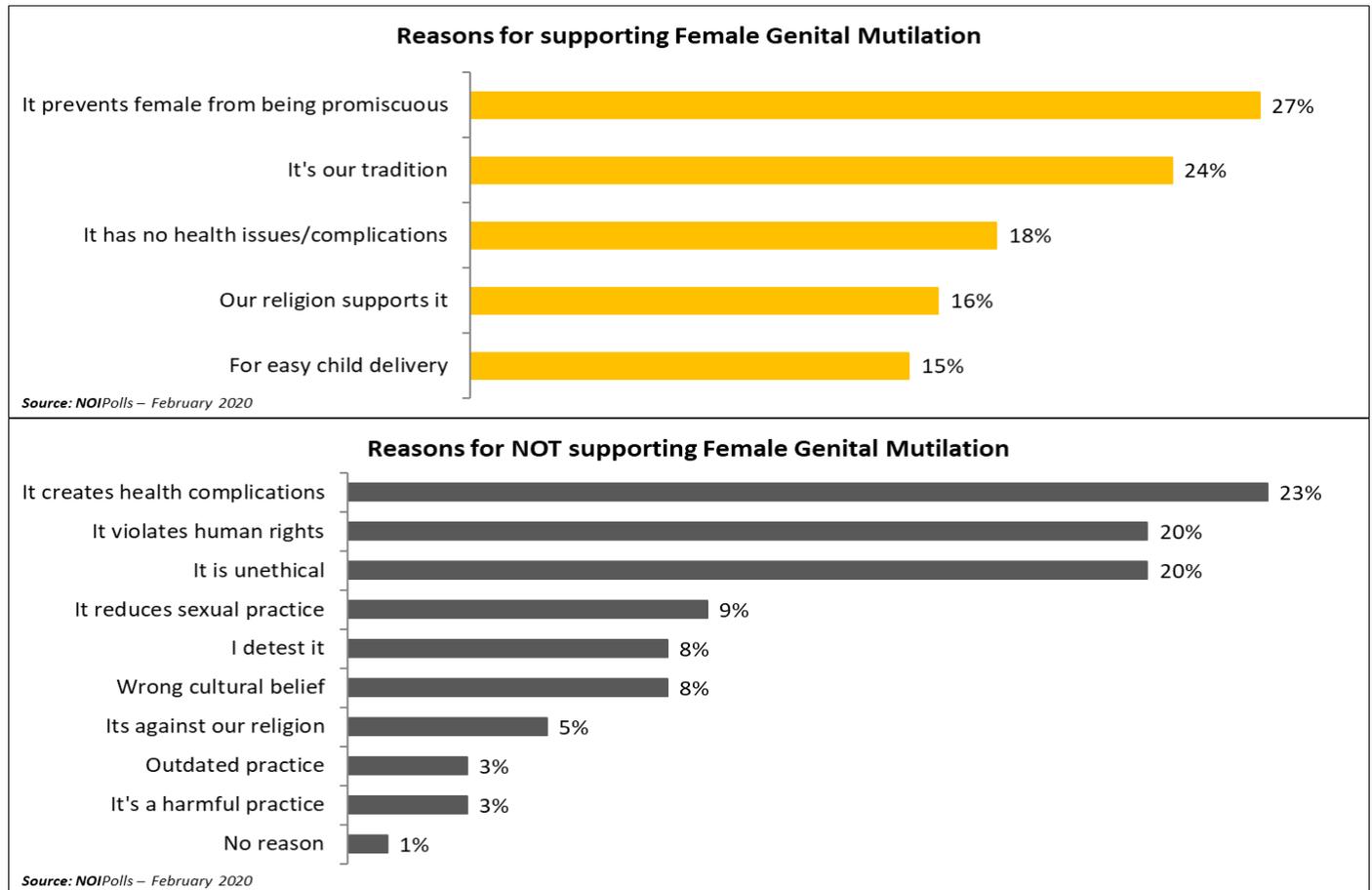
Trend analysis show that there is a 4 percent increase in the proportion of male respondents who stated that they support of Female Genital Mutilation as it increased from 12 percent in 2017 to 16 percent in 2020.



Furthermore, 14 percent of Nigerians who disclosed their support for FGM were further probed to state their reasons and the larger fraction (27 percent) mentioned that ‘it prevents women from being promiscuous’. This was followed by 24 percent who mentioned that ‘it is our tradition’ and 18 percent stated that ‘it has no health complications’ amongst other reasons. However, the United Nation Population Fund reports that practice of FGM have been medically proven to have serious implications for the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women, with attendant issues such as infibulation, severe pain, shock, haemorrhage, tetanus or other infections, urine

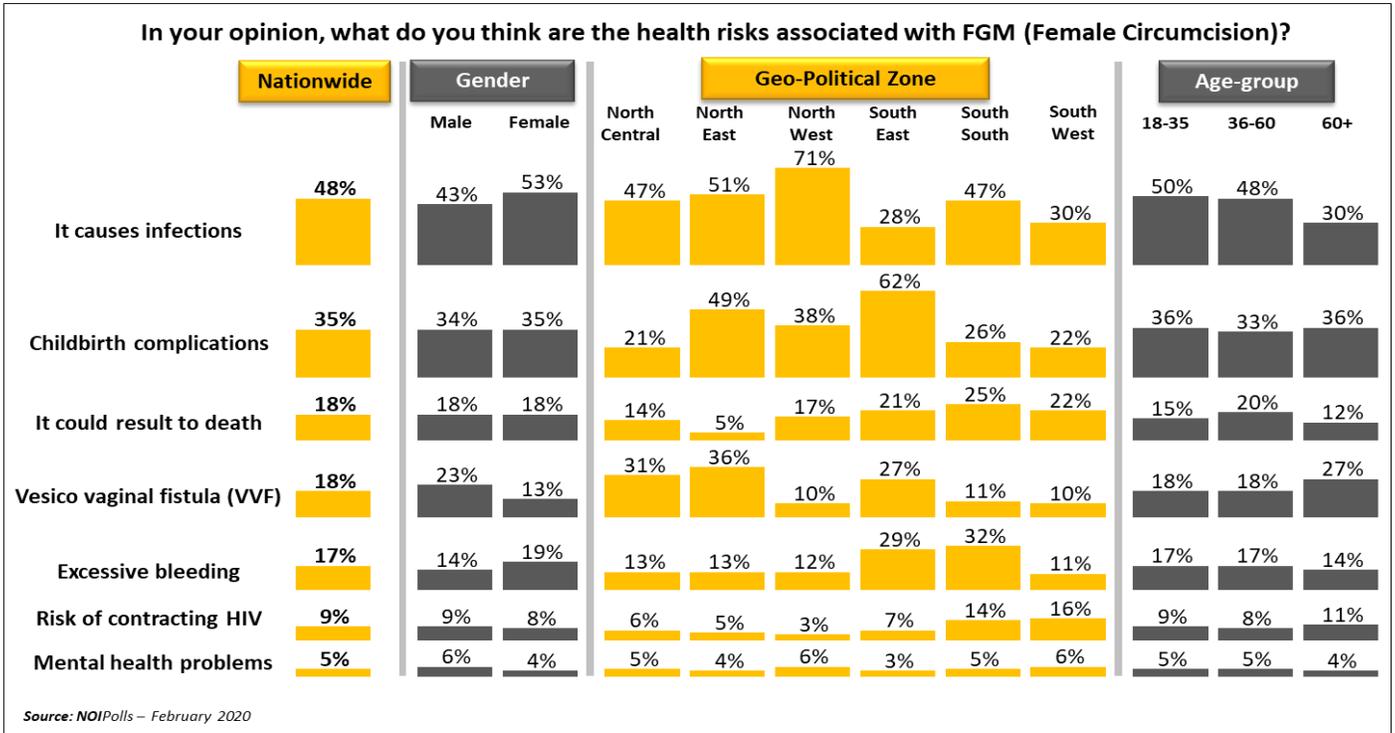
retention, ulceration of the genital region and injury to adjacent tissue and septicaemia among other complications during childbirth.⁵

Also, respondents who do not support the practice justified their position with the following reasons: 'It creates health complications' (23 percent), 'it violates human rights' (20 percent) and 'it is unethical' (20 percent) amongst other mentions.

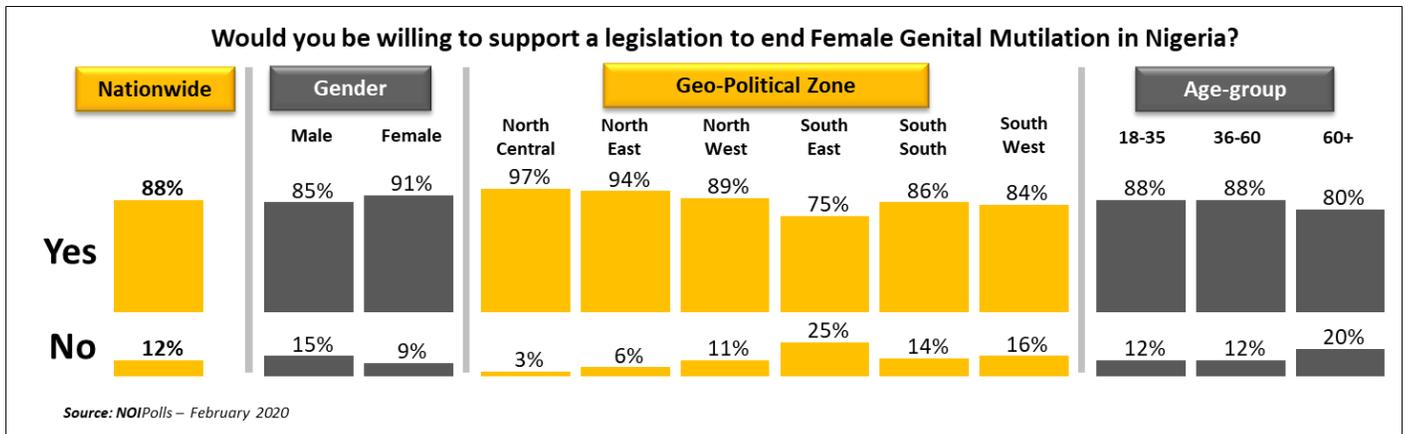


Perception on health risks associated with FGM practice revealed that most respondents are of the view that it causes infection (48 percent) and they are more respondents from the North West who mentioned this. This is followed by 35 percent of the respondents who stated that it could cause childbirth complications and Nigerians from the South East region had more people saying this.

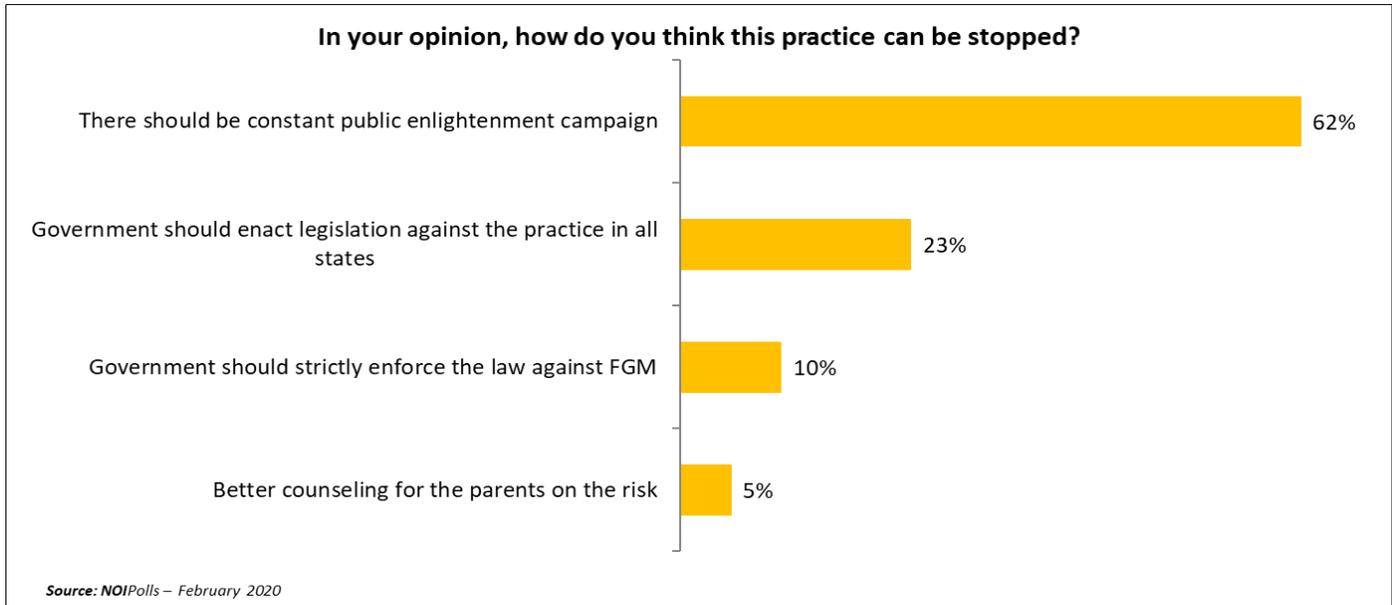
⁵ <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-frequently-asked-questions>



With regards to legislation, majority of Nigerians (88 percent) indicated their support for a legislation to end the practice in the country. On the contrary, 12 percent of the respondents confirmed that they would not support any legislation to eliminate the practice of FGM.



Lastly, 62 percent of Nigerians recommended that they should be constant public enlightenment campaign on the effects of FGM. Also, 23 percent suggested that government should ensure that legislation against FGM is enacted in all states while 10 percent advocated for strict enforcement of the law against FGM in the country.



In conclusion, the poll has shown that majority of Nigerians (88 percent) are in support of a legislation to end Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria considering the health risks cited by Nigerians. Although the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) was passed into law in 2015 to criminalise FGM practice, difficulty in the enforcement of the VAPP Act is an issue given that it has not been domesticated in the states. Currently, 13 out of 36 states in Nigeria have their own individual state laws expressly prohibiting FGM/C. These states are Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Bayelsa, Ogun, Delta, Ebonyi, Oyo, Imo, Edo, Cross-River and Rivers however, the VAPP Act is actively enforced in only 3 out of the 36 states in Nigeria and the FCT and the states are Abuja, Anambra, Oyo and Ebonyi.

Finally, there is urgent need to carry out aggressive public enlightenment campaign on the negative effects of FGM as recommended by 62 percent of Nigerians. Therefore, to promote the elimination of female genital mutilation, coordinated and systematic efforts are needed, and they must engage whole communities and focus on human rights, gender equality, sexual education and attention to the needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.

Survey Methods

The opinion poll was conducted in the week commencing January 27th, 2020. It involved telephone interviews of a proportionate nationwide sample of 1,000 randomly selected phone-owning Nigerians aged 18 years and above, representing the six geo-political regions and 36 states and the FCT of the country. Interviews were conducted in 5 languages – Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Pidgin English and English. Although we can say with 95% confidence that the results obtained were statistically precise – within a margin of error of plus or minus 4.65%; we recognize that the exclusive use of telephone polling has its limitation of excluding non-phone-owning Nigerians. Nonetheless, with the country’s tele density put over 100 percent by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), we consider our telephone polling approach appropriate. Also, given the rigorous scientific process of randomization and stratification applied, we can confidently stand by the validity of our methodology and approach. NOIPolls Limited, No1 for country specific polling services in West Africa. We conduct periodic opinion polls and studies on various socio-economic and political issues in Nigeria. More information is available at www.noi-polls.com.

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