THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM

April 26, 2014

Study says that circumcision rates are declining in the U.S.

by Jessica Firger

Listeners, just from hearing that title, you would never guess that this article is a pro-circumcision propaganda piece, would you?

*Circumcision for male infants is becoming less common in the U.S., according to new data published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings.*

Jess, that is called - progress. For centuries male babies have been butchered for religious reasons. But modern, more-educated people are reconsidering this "Covenant with God."

In an effort to justify the mutilation, believers are now trying to convince everyone that the main reason to circumcise is for the medical benefits. That is called Post Hoc Reasoning. It is also dishonest.

Unfortunately for believers, medical science has yet to back them up.

*The paper also finds that over their lifetime, half of all uncircumcised males will contract a medical condition related to their foreskin.*

Jess, over their lifetime half of all males will sprain their wrists; but we don't amputate their hands at birth.

If half of all uncircumcised males will contract medical conditions, they should be treated for their conditions, and then released back into the wild.

*Their findings further back up a 2012 public statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics in support of widespread education initiatives and access to infant male circumcision.*

Jess, why didn't you tell your readers what else the American Academy of Pediatrics said in that public statement?

Well, I guess that means it's up to me then. Here is the conclusion they published:

"The health benefits are not great enough to recommend routine circumcision."

Jess, that seems pretty relevant and important. I wonder why you reported the education and access information, which supported your bias, but ignored the more important information in the conclusion?

Actually I don't wonder, Jess. The word "bias" explains it all ... quite well.

*Brian Morris, coauthor of the new report and professor emeritus in the School of Medical Sciences at the University of Sydney, in a press release said, "Infant circumcision should be regarded as equivalent to childhood vaccination. As such, it would be unethical not to routinely offer parents circumcision for their baby boy. Delay puts the child's health at risk and will usually mean it will never happen."*

Jess, Morris committed the logical fallacy of False Equivalency. The American Medical Association strongly supports vaccinations for all children; it does not recommend routine circumcisions. So they are not equivalent, and his comparison is therefore ... invalid.

*Morris and his colleagues found the circumcision rate in newborns has declined from 83 percent in the 1960s to 77 percent in 2010. (The overall rate among U.S. males age 14 to 59 is 81 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.) Additionally, the data suggests there is a racial disparity driven primarily by access to procedure and cultural and educational factors. Circumcision rates over the last decade reached 91 percent in white men, 76 percent in black men and only 44 percent in Hispanic men.*

Jess, while we are on the subject of other cultures, you might want to check out what is happening in the world's most civilized nations. They are finally beginning to fight back against this barbaric religious practice. Circumcision, like the horrid religion that spawned it, is beginning to disappear.

*The authors speculate several reasons for this. In the U.S., the Hispanic population continues to rise, and the researchers suggest that families in this demographic tend to be less familiar with the procedure and its benefits.*

Jess, instead of looking down at other races and accusing them of ignorance, maybe the authors should have considered the alternative: perhaps they are more familiar with the procedure and its risks.

*Additionally, they speculate that the gap in health insurance access -- including Medicaid -- has resulted in many families opting to skip the procedure to save money.*

Jess, so in addition to the pain, mutilation, risk of infection and death ... they also have to pay?

Jess, maybe those Hispanics weren't so dumb after all, huh?

*On average, circumcision rates are 24 percent lower in states lacking Medicaid coverage for the poor. The study says the benefits of newborn circumcision exceed the risks by at least 100 to 1.*

Jess, think about what you just wrote. Try to control your bias for just a moment, and think.

If the benefits exceeded the risks by 100 to 1, as the study claimed, every medical organization in the world would be requiring circumcision. But the fact is, that only one medical organization in the world recommends it, and even then, only for parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Jess, that should have been an easy one ... and you muffed it.

*Clinical research has found circumcision can safeguard an infant from a number of health complications, most notably urinary tract infections.*

Jess, your choice of the word "safeguard" has, once again, exposed your bias. Reducing risk is not the same thing as safeguarding.

Aren't journalists supposed to be objective and unbiased? Or did I misunderstand that one when I was in school?

*Kidney damage develops in about half of infants who contract a UTI. The adult lifetime risk for a UTI is approximately 1 in 3 for uncircumcised men.*

Jess, when do we get to the "fair and balanced" part of your article?

*Additionally, circumcision has been found to lower one's risk for contracting HIV and HPV, the human papilloma virus, which can cause genital warts and has been linked to some cancers.*

Jess, you are trumpeting the risks for uncircumcised men, but I'm not seeing any statistics about the risks of circumcision. Why is that?

*Another study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association reviewed more than 500 studies, finding that circumcision reduces risk for HIV transmission in heterosexual men by 60 percent, genital herpes by 30 percent, and cancer-causing strains of HPV by 35 percent.*

Jess, stop - you're killing me. You are dumping a mountain of crap on me. If all this is true, then why is there not one organization in the world demanding mandatory circumcision?

It's because you are exaggerating, cherry-picking studies that support your prejudice, and only presenting your side of the argument. The world's medical organizations do not support your position. That is why you are forced to present your argument in such a misleading fashion.

*Some research suggests that circumcision in infancy actually lowers the risk for prostate cancer in adulthood.*

Jess, if you read Wikipedia articles on cervical cancer and prostate cancer, you know what you won't find?

Any mention of circumcision as a method of prevention for either cancer. The bottom line is that they just don't know enough yet about either cancer to pin down details regarding causation.

*A study of 3,400 men found those who were circumcised before their first sexual intercourse were 15 percent less likely to develop prostate cancer than men who were not.*

Jess, one giveaway to determine if one has been reading a propaganda piece, is that, at the end, knowing that most readers will not have read that far, the propagandist will insert their disclaimer. It is inserted for the purpose of being able to claim that you have presented the other side. Is that what you are going to do?

Let's see.

*Opponents of circumcision say removing the foreskin decreases sensitivity and limits sensation during sexual activity. Others say circumcision is a human rights issue, and that it's unethical for a family to make the decision for their child.*

Jess, you propagandists are so predictable. You figured that, at the very end, you would mention the opponent's side.

But you avoided the most important reasons that opponents give for their opposition to genital mutilation - infection and death. Instead you assigned them a sensitivity argument which has pretty much been debunked, and one valid point: the ethical issue.

Jess, if you represent the state of journalism today, then it's no wonder America is in the shape it's in. The good news, for you, is that if you ever lose your gig at CBS, you will always have a job waiting for you ... at Fox News.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

The result of a study on brain changes

associated with casual marijuana use in young adults

found that more 'joints' equals more damage

The size and shape of two brain regions involved in emotion and motivation may differ in young adults who smoke marijuana at least once a week. The findings suggest that recreational marijuana use may lead to previously unidentified brain changes.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States, with an estimated 19 million people reporting recent use. Marijuana use is often associated with impairments in motivation, attention, learning, and memory. Previous studies exposing animals to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) -- the main psychoactive component of marijuana -- show that repeated exposure to the drug causes structural changes in brain regions involved with these functions. However, less is known about how, low to moderate marijuana use affects brain structure in people, particularly in teens and young adults.

Researchers used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to compare the brains of 18 to 25-year olds who reported smoking marijuana at least once per week with those with little to no history of marijuana use. Although psychiatric evaluations ruled out the possibility that the marijuana users were dependent on the drug, imaging data revealed they had significant brain differences. The nucleus accumbens -- a brain region known to be involved in reward processing -- was larger, and altered in its shape and structure, in the marijuana users compared to non-users.

This study suggests that even light to moderate recreational marijuana use can cause changes in brain anatomy. These observations are particularly interesting because previous studies have focused primarily on the brains of heavy marijuana smokers, and have largely ignored the brains of casual users.

The team of scientists compared the size, shape, and density of the nucleus accumbens and the amygdala -- a brain region that plays a central role in emotion -- in 20 marijuana users and 20 non-users. Each marijuana user was asked to estimate their drug consumption over a three-month period, including the number of days they smoked and the amount of the drug consumed each day. The scientists found that the more the marijuana users smoked, the greater the abnormalities in the nucleus accumbens and amygdala. The shape and density of both of these regions also differed between marijuana users and non-users.

This study raises a strong challenge to the idea that casual marijuana use isn't associated with bad consequences.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

MOZI (470 BC – 391 BC) 79 years

He was a Chinese philosopher during the Hundred Schools of Thought period (aka - the early Warring States period). He founded the school of Mohism and argued strongly against Confucianism and Daoism. During the Warring States period, Mohism was actively developed and practiced in many states but fell out of favour when the legalist Qin Dynasty came to power. During that period, many Mohist classics were ruined when Qin Shi Huang carried out the burning of books and burying of scholars. The importance of Mohism further declined when Confucianism became the dominant school of thought during the Han Dynasty, until mostly disappearing by the middle of the Western Han Dynasty.

"To kill one man is to be guilty of a capital crime,

to kill ten men is to increase the guilt ten-fold,

to kill a hundred men is to increase it a hundred-fold.

This the rulers of the earth all recognize

and yet when it comes to the greatest crime-

waging war on another state- they praise it!"