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### SECOND OPINION

## Circumcision: Another Look

By George K. Hughes, MD

There have been recent concerns about the necessity of circumcision on the newborn. One idea in favor of newborn circumcision is in the area of infection. There have been some articles that indicate urinary tract infection is more common in the uncircumcised infant. Another deterrent to circumcision has to do with sexually related diseases. John G. Swadey, MD (New England Journal of Medicine, 1987) states that circumcised men show a "somewhat higher incidence of genital warts, nongonococcal urethritis and scabies." A. J. Fink, MD (New England Journal of Medicine, 1986) gave a hypothesis that "the presence of a foreskin predisposes both the heterosexual and homosexual men to the acquisition of AIDS." However, Robert W. Enzenauer, MD (New England Journal of Medicine, 1987) refutes this hypothesis. He also states that Dr. Fink's statement, "both genital herpes and syphilis are more common in the uncircumcised man," is not a foregone conclusion. Some believe the pain involved with circumcision may be a contraindication. The question of carcinoma has been presented in relation to circumcision. In an article by Benjamin Spock ([Redbook, 1989](#)) he argues against the necessity of circumcision. He cites three reasons why circumcision is being questioned for the newborn: 1. pain baby experiences; 2. Risks involved in performing the procedure; 3. Whether the procedure actually prevents disease. He further states that circumcision was once recommended because "women married to uncircumcised men were more likely to develop cancer of the cervix." However, 10 years later this opinion has changed.

We recently conducted a survey to try to determine if there is a difference between the sexual sensitivity of men who have been circumcised and those who were uncircumcised. Questionnaires were sent to 1,500 men who had been married to the same spouse for over 50 years. These were sent out to learn if there could be some degree of difference in the sexual sensitivity or degree of sexual compatibility between the circumcised and uncircumcised male. Approximately 70% of the respondents were uncircumcised, while approximately 30% were circumcised.

Our survey suggests that there is a difference between the sexuality of the circumcised and uncircumcised male during his lifetime. It also suggests that the uncircumcised male has a more favorable sexual compatibility in his marriage.

During my experiences in medicine and surgery, occasionally there arose the

question of circumcision and sexual compatibility. It seemed to me that the uncircumcised male had less of a problem in sexual compatibility. This observation led me to conduct the survey. I was assisted in this survey by Cynthia Pomeroy, BS.

It is now my opinion that we have an additional argument against circumcision. It would also appear that this information would outweigh all other arguments in favor of circumcision.

George K. Hughes, MD is a Columbus physician.  
OHIO Medicine

**[CIRP Note: Dr. Hughes is reported to have passed away before the results of his survey could be published so it seems that this preliminary report is all we shall ever know of his findings.]**

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