

## CeMAViE

**Multidisciplinary centre specialised in care  
for women with physical, sexual and/or  
psychological complications caused by  
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**



cemavie

Medical Centre for victims of Female  
Genital Mutilation (FGM)

## What is Female Genital Mutilation?

The term Female Genital Mutilation or FGM refers to all procedures resulting in the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-therapeutic purposes (WHO 2008). Female genital mutilation is a form of gender-based violence and a violation of women's human rights as well as their sexual, mental and physical health.

## What are the consequences of FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation can have a major impact on women's lives. There can be immediate consequences (haemorrhage, infection, psychological trauma, death) as well as a medium- or long-term impact (lack of self-confidence, pain, sexual dysfunction, recurrent infections and complications during childbirth).

## How many women are circumcised in the world and in Belgium?

According to UNICEF, more than 200 million women worldwide have undergone some form of FGM. According to the European Parliament, 600,000 women in Europe are living with FGM and 180,000 girls in Europe are at risk of being cut.

In **Belgium**, it is estimated that more than 93,000 girls and women come from a country where FGM is practised. Of these, most likely **23,000 have undergone FGM** and **12,000 are at risk of being cut** if no preventative action is taken (estimates from 31 December 2020, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IEWM) and FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment).

## Multidisciplinary care offered by CeMAViE

**The centre offers a multidisciplinary approach.** A midwife, a sexologist, a psychologist and a gynaecologist work together to offer personalised support. Specific requests are examined by the team and an individual programme is tailored for each woman. The majority of women receive sexological and/or psychological support. Some also undergo surgical treatment.

**In sexology consultations** women reappropriate their right to their body, and develop a potential for sexual pleasure. These are important steps that help removing the pain often experienced during sexual relations.

**During the meetings with the psychologist**, each woman shares her story in order to identify her skills, strengthen her self-esteem, develop her sense of security, and help her deal with the emotions caused by past or current experiences.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2014, the treatment is fully reimbursed by the social security system, including clitoral reconstructive surgery.



## Surgical treatment of female genital mutilation

### - Desinfibulation

In the case of infibulation, the inner or outer labia are glued or sewn together narrowing the vaginal opening. Desinfibulation consists of re-opening what is closed, and thus restoring the vaginal opening. After the operation the final appearance of the vulva depends on what was cut (of the clitoris and inner labia).

### - Treatment of cysts

The formation of dermal inclusion cysts is a common complication of female genital mutilation. These cysts can be surgically removed.

### - Clitoral reconstruction

The clitoris is 8 to 10 cm long. During the FGM, it is mostly the visible external part (the gland of the clitoris) that is injured or removed. The non-visible internal part remains and can still be aroused by external stimulation or during penetration.

Clitoral reconstructive surgery consists of re-exposing the remaining part of the clitoris. This procedure has been shown to be effective in restoring the woman's bodily integrity. In some cases, the clitoral function can also be restored.



CeMAViE is placed under the High Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Mathilde.

## The multidisciplinary team at CeMAViE

Dr Martin CAILLET, gynaecologist  
Fabienne RICHARD, midwife  
Cendrine VANDERHOEVEN, sexologist  
Françoise LEROUX, psychologist

## Consultations

Opening hours: Tuesday 8h30 – 12h30  
Appointment: 02 / 535 47 14  
Address: Rue Haute 320, 1000 Brussels  
CHU Saint-Pierre (Porte de Hal)

## Transport

**Metro lines 2 and 6:** Porte de Hal  
**Pre-Metro:** lines 3,4, 51 Porte de Hal  
**Bus:** 27, 48 Saint-Pierre, Porte de Hal  
**Bus De Lijn and TEC:** St Gilles (Porte de Hal/Blaes)  
**Station:** Brussels Midi. Lifts at Midi Station.

Sites: [www.GAMS.be](http://www.GAMS.be) - [IFEWM](#) - [FPS Health](#)  
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