specialists in child abuse particularly if carried out without analgesia?

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Dr Wynne comments:
I would agree with Dr Roberton that male circumcision is abusive and will happily support his lead in an education programme to work towards its eradication.

While waiting for his initiative on behalf of men, I will continue to look at the position of women and babies; female genital mutilation doubles the risk of maternal death and increases the risk of the baby being born dead by 3–4 times (World Health Assembly, May 1993).

Circumcision in women involves cutting off the prepuce of the clitoris, with the body of the clitoris remaining intact: this is analogous to male circumcision. Excision refers to cutting off the clitoris with or without the removal of the labia minora. The third type of mutilation, infibulation, involves removal of the clitoris, labia minora and much of the labia majora. The two remaining sides of the vulva are stitched together and a small hole is left inferiorly. There are not surprisingly many complications of infibulation.

The publication Child Protection and Female Genital Mutilation by Hedley and Dorkenoo, published by Forward and endorsed by the Department of Health 1992, explains many of the issues involved and strategies which are likely to be useful. Female genital mutilation describes accurately a procedure which communities (and colleagues) would prefer to refer to euphemistically as female circumcision.