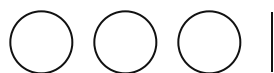


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Protest in New Haven Saturday to target circumcision

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NEW HAVEN >> Amanda Ducker of Norwich will be protesting downtown Saturday against male circumcision, a common procedure in the United States, as a human rights issue on behalf of her son and all males.

“We don’t perform female mutilation in this country” but “we don’t offer our boys the same protection,” said Ducker, who also has two girls.

The organization Bloodstained Men is taking its message to Chapel and College streets to spread its message that the foreskin has a function and that males should have a choice about whether it should be removed.

“It was put there for a reason, whether you believe in evolution or God,” Ducker said. She said the foreskin (or prepuce) helps in lubrication and sexual functioning and that medical warnings about possible urinary tract infections and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including cervical cancer, are not credible.

The American Pediatric Association issued a policy statement in 2012 saying, “the health benefits of newborn male circumcision outweigh the risks, but the benefits are not great enough to recommend universal newborn circumcision. ... The final decision should still be left to parents to make in the context of their religious, ethical and cultural beliefs.”

However, the APA also said the risks of the surgery are outweighed by its benefits, including “prevention of urinary tract infections, penile cancer, and transmission of some sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.”

Ducker counters that “it is painful, it is traumatic, a majority of physicians do not use any kind of anesthetic,” and besides, “There’s no way to anesthetize a newborn baby without it being a lifesaving surgery,” she said.

Ducker is a nurse at Backus Hospital in Norwich and said, “I can’t stomach” circumcision. “I do not work in labor and delivery by choice.”

Bloodstained Men was formed by Brother K (his legal name), who lives outside Sacramento, California, and who has been leading protests recently on the East Coast.

Saturday’s demonstration, which he said would be family-friendly, will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is primarily directed at hospital or medical circumcisions, but Brother K said there are Jews who want the practice stopped as a religious ritual. Muslims also circumcise males, in a tradition tracing back to the biblical story of Abraham.

“The European medical community has condemned the American doctors for circumcising baby boys,” he said. The Royal Dutch Medical Association has called it “traumatic, a violation of human rights,” he said.

Comparing male circumcision to female genital mutilation, which is illegal in this country, Brother K said, “The beliefs of parents have no bearing on the criminality of the offense.

“The circumcision of an entire nation of men is a human rights catastrophe,” Brother K said. “We feel it’s our role as responsible men to speak up and stop it.”

“The foreskin contains 70 to 80 percent of the actual pleasure receptors of the male penis,” Brother K said. “Circumcision fundamentally alters the glans of the penis from an internal organ covered by a specialized structure that we call the foreskin” to an external organ. “It’s just a devastating loss.”

“I believe that someday there will be a law or should be a law or a court case ... that grants (that) all American citizens should be protected by law from genital surgery until they reach the age of majority.”

He said most parents are not aware how much pain and shock the baby suffers when its foreskin is removed and “the medical community has trivialized what they are doing.”

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