

'Bloodstained' group slams circumcision during Fargo protest

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David Atkinson and Anastasia Van Buskirk take part in a demonstration on Monday, Aug. 7, to raise awareness of what they say are the harmful ramifications of circumcision. Dave Olson/The Forum

FARGO – Circumcision is unnecessary and diminishes the sex lives of American males.

That was the message of a handful of demonstrators at a south Fargo protest on Monday, Aug. 7. The group, which calls itself Bloodstained Men and Their Friends, is led in part by a California man named Brother K, who stressed that is his legal name.

Brother K said his public opposition to circumcision goes back to the 1980s but his work became more organized about five years ago after the American Academy of Pediatrics took a stand that the benefits of circumcision, the removal of the foreskin from the male penis, outweighed the risks.

Brother K said the group protested the academy's convention in 2012 by wearing garb that graphically implied private parts had been bloodied and the uniform has been worn by "intactivists" ever since.

He said the nonprofit group does about 60 protests a year and is currently on a 17-day tour to warn the public – specifically parents – that "the rest of the world's doctors don't do this to their babies. American doctors are essentially alone doing circumcision on newborn infants."

As part of the tour, the group has held protests in Dickinson, Bismarck, Minot and Grand Forks.

Brother K said some estimate 50 to 60 percent of American baby boys are circumcised, a number he said would drop if parents better understood that circumcision carries no health benefits and diminishes the enjoyment of sexual pleasure for males who have had the procedure done.

Monday's protest in Fargo was held at 45th Street and 13th Avenue South, a busy intersection where a number of drivers honked support for the group while others accepted literature handed to them through car windows.

Brother K said they sometimes receive jeers from drivers, but he said in recent years public sentiment has gone from being largely derisive to more curious and supportive.

"There has been a decided shift in public opinion," he said.

Fellow protestors Anastasia Van Buskirk, of Chicago, and David Atkinson, of Boston, said they became involved in the movement after learning about circumcision through social media and other sources.

"The more you learn, the more disturbing it is," Atkinson said.



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