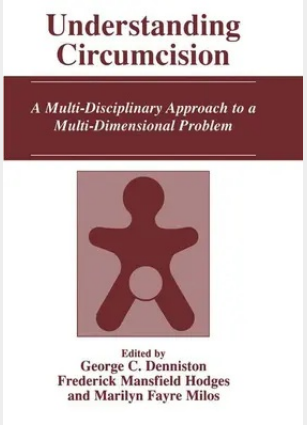
Denniston / Hodges / Milos

Understanding Circumcision

A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to a Multi-Dimensional Problem



Every year, in the United States and the third world combined, 13.3 million boys and 2 million girls are circumcised. Whether because of perceived medical, cultural, or religious necessity, most of these parents feel they have no alternative but to allow their children to undergo this surgery. Sparking intense debate, the circumcision of children is a highly controversial and complex phenomenon that touches a variety of sociological areas, such as religious beliefs, identity issues, medical conceptualizations, fear, and superstition. The contributors to this volume comprise an international panel of experts in the fields of medicine, psychology, law, ethics, sociology, anthropology, history, theology, and politics. In 18 chapters they discuss the history of circumcision; document the physical and psychological consequences of circumcision; present the latest anatomical discoveries about the male prepuce; analyze the role of circumcision in various traditions; reveal the medical industry's investment in the practice; describe current legislative efforts to protect children from circumcision; and outline effective, culturally sensitive methods that are being implemented today to safeguard the human rights of at-risk children.
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