To cut or not to cut... that remains the question
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Aside from this, there is a lot we can do as health care providers. This includes minimizing complications and offering adequate analgesia and anesthesia for those who elect to proceed. Furthermore, we should be equipped to support families that decline, facilitate access to resources and financial support for those interested in having their son circumcised, and help those who can’t make a decision due to personal conflict or discrepancies between parents. Moreover, we should empower families with the ability to revisit a decision not to proceed based on new information. Lastly, we should individually reflect if the risks are balanced or truly tip in one direction? I suspect the conclusion differs depending on how you interpret the data and weigh each particular point. For example, although the quoted value for future corrective procedures after circumcision appears fairly low, it is noteworthy that the number of revision surgeries and people dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedure appears to be on the rise. Thus, body image, particularly as later perceived by the individual, has to be taken into account. Furthermore, some of the protective benefits may have to be adjusted based on the context of emerging interventions. Notorious is the change in landscape that is likely to be introduced by the widespread administration of the HPV vaccine, or the impact of antiretroviral prophylaxis in high risk populations. Moreover, many have well-founded concerns regarding a false sense of security from being circumcised, triggering a more relaxed attitude towards risky behaviors, paradoxically increasing the individual risk for sexually transmitted infections.

As I applaud the authors’ effort to critically review the literature and hold experts accountable for their reviews and interpretation of the literature, I also hope that we can synergize efforts rather than antagonize views. Until we change our approach to the circumcision controversy, I foresee that the debate will go on, and on, and on…

References