



# 2015 TERMINOLOGY SURVEY

## INTACTIVISTS PREFER TO USE POSITIVE TERMS DURING DISCUSSIONS

### OVERVIEW:

This 2015 survey of 471 self-selected Intact America supporters sourced from social media posts concerned what terminology they found was most persuasive when talking to others about our issue. Surprisingly, participants placed all the terms in both categories: “I use these terms” and “I don’t use these terms.” For instance, 94% found the word *intact* effective; it was ranked highest overall. However, 6% of intactivists say they do not use the word.

The survey was distributed on Intact America’s social media accounts with a link to the online Qualtrics survey form. Participants were asked to rank their terminology preference from a list of commonly used terms.

### PARTICIPANTS:

Two-thirds of the participants were women, with two stating they were not intact. The other one-third comprising an even distribution of intact, cut, and restoring men.

### RESULTS:

*Intact*, *Normal*, *Healthy penis*, and *His Body, His Rights* were the top-most favored terms; they are factual, positive terms. (See Fig. 1 for terminology ranking and popularity)

These results seem to solve the problem of which term—*male genital mutilation* (our term) or *circumcision* (the opposition’s term)—is the most persuasive. *Male genital mutilation* was ranked as being much more effective.

A few intactivists say they rarely use the term *circumcision*, which must be a challenge considering how difficult it is to communicate to a stranger what the context is. We would like to know their secret.

*Rape*, *routine infant circumcision*, and *sexual assault* were three of the weakest terms in the “I don’t use these terms” section. However, *routine infant circumcision*, which was commonplace decades ago has been criticized as promoting the surgery, is still used by many intactivists.

### SEX DIFFERENCE

There was a marked sex difference, too. Women ranked *mutilation* at #7, or “somewhat effective.” Overall, men ranked the term in their #1 place, exceeding *intact* at 2<sup>nd</sup> place. But even among men there was a range. Intact and circumcised men ranked *mutilation* in 1<sup>st</sup> place but restored/restoring men ranked it at 3<sup>rd</sup> place (interesting, considering that at one time they were circumcised, too). We should consider that how men—the targets, victims, and survivors of male genital mutilation—talk about the surgery, and how that could guide our messages.

## TOP TERMS:

Of intactivists who ranked *intact* in first place, it is interesting to see what their other top-rated terms were. After all, *intact* is the term the movement coined. They ranked *circumcision*, *his body/his rights*, and *human rights violation* as their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> place terms, in that order.

## OTHER TERMS:

Many participants wrote in their favorite, most-persuasive term, but none of them were mentioned often enough to warrant inclusion in a future survey. Some were similar such as: whole penis, natural penis, scarred penis, and cut penis; and prepucectomy and foreskinectomy. Other suggested terms were: barbaric, non-medically-indicated circumcision, infant torture, bodily autonomy, baby cutter, misandry, equality, disfigurement, RIC, and uncut.

There were also many write-ins for variations of terms already used in the survey such as: mutilation, male sexual mutilation, genital mutilation, and childhood genital mutilation; genital cutting, male genital cutting, and penile genital cutting; foreskin amputation; and sexual abuse.

## TERMINOLOGY

*Note: This is the list of terms we asked participants to rank.*

Q: Please rank these terms by how often you use them when talking to strangers about this issue. Just drag-n-drop to rearrange them, with the first one being your most frequently used term, and the 18th as your least used term.

- Abuse
- Alteration
- Amputation
- Circumcision
- Forced genital cutting
- Genital cutting
- His boy, his rights
- His choice
- Human rights violation
- Inalienable right
- Intact
- Male genital mutilation
- Men's rights
- Non-consensual genital cutting
- Normal, healthy penis
- Rape
- Routine infant circumcision
- Sexual assault

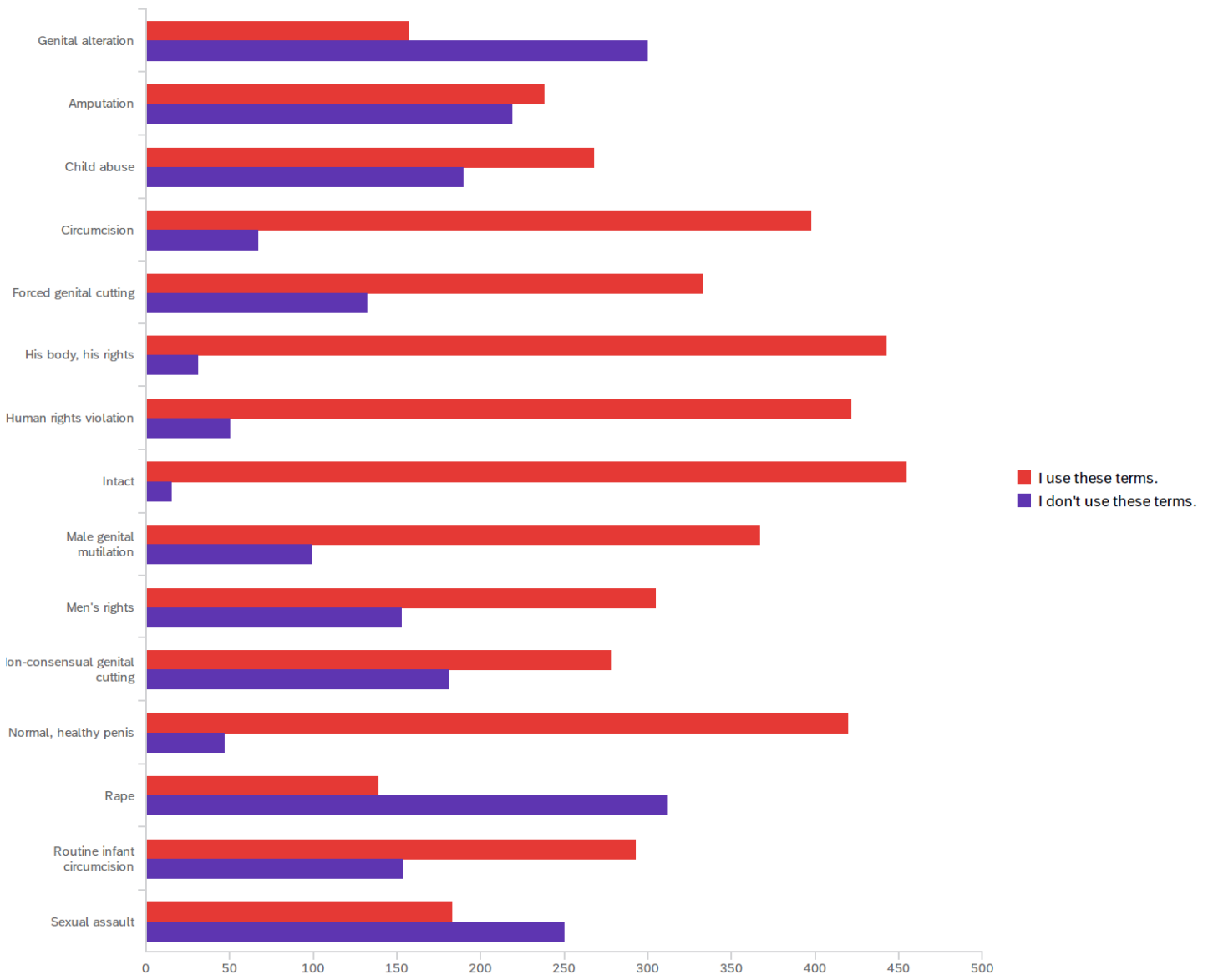


Fig. 1 Results for each provided term.