

SHORT WARNINGS ABOUT FORCIBLE FORESKIN RETRACTION

1) The American Academy of Pediatrics:

"Until separation occurs, do NOT try to pull the foreskin back — especially an infant's. Forcing the foreskin to retract before it is ready may severely harm the penis and cause pain, bleeding, and tears in the skin. "

2.) *Pediatrics*, a reference text by Rudolph and Hoffman, details the typical timetable for the natural desquamation of the child's *balano-preputial lamina*, and warns:

"The prepuce, foreskin, is normally not retractile at birth. The ventral surface of the foreskin is naturally fused to the glans of the penis. At age 6 years, 80 percent of boys still do not have a fully retractile foreskin. By age 17 years, however, 97 to 99 percent of uncircumcised males have a fully retractile foreskin... **in particular, there is no indication ever for forceful retraction of the foreskin from the glans.** Especially in the newborn and infant, this produces small lacerations in addition to a severe abrasion of the glans. The result is scarring and a resultant secondary phimosis. **Thus it is incorrect to teach mothers to retract the foreskin.**"

3.) *Roberton's Textbook of Neonatology* also warns:

"All newborn males have "phimosis"; the foreskin is not meant to be retractile at this age, **and the parents must be told to leave it alone and not to try and retract it.** Forcible retraction in infancy tears the tissues of the tip of the foreskin causing scarring, and is the commonest cause of genuine phimosis later in life."

4.) *Avery's Neonatology* issues a similar warning:

"Forcible retraction of the foreskin tends to produce tears in the preputial orifice **resulting in scarring that may lead to pathologic [i.e., in this case, iatrogenic, or physician-induced] phimosis.**"

5.) Similarly, *Osborne's Pediatrics* notes that:

"[phimosis or paraphimosis] is usually secondary to infection or trauma from trying to reduce a tight foreskin..." **"circumferential scarring of the foreskin is not a normal condition and will generally not resolve."**

6.) *Avery's Neonatology: Pathophysiology and Management of the Newborn*, MacDonald (ed) Lippincott, (2005:1088):

"Because circumcision is so common in the United States, the natural history of the preputial development has been lost..."

7.) *Darby* --A medical historian writing in 2005 notes the following about the invented and erroneous suggestion of need for aggressive male infant hygiene:

"To appreciate the scale of the error, consider its equivalent in women: it would be as if doctors had decided that the intact hymen in infant girls was a congenital defect known as 'imperforate hymen' arising from 'arrested development' and hence needed to be artificially broken in order to allow the interior of the vagina to be washed out regularly to ensure hygiene." (Dr. Robert Darby, *A Surgical Temptation, The Demonization of the Foreskin and the Rise of Circumcision in Britain*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005:235.)