Former Botswana President Advocates Circumcision as HIV Prevention

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Former president of Botswana Festus Mogae is urging African leaders to promote male circumcision as a form of HIV prevention, AllAfrica.com reports. He is heading a delegation from Champions for an HIV-Free Generation, an organization comprised of African heads of state and other prominent figures.

On a tour of sub-Saharan Africa, Mogae told Mozambican leaders: “We must explain that circumcision gives people greater possibilities of not being infected by AIDS. This does not mean that people become immune to the virus—and that should be clear.” In addition, he said that leaders should teach their citizens to limit the number of sexual partners to reduce their risk of contracting HIV.

According to the article, male circumcision has yet to be accepted everywhere, particularly since it must be performed using sterilized equipment by a medical professional. Using unsterilized blades actually heightens the risk of getting HIV. In addition, there is concern that uncircumcised men may abandon condoms following the procedure thinking they are no longer at risk.

Mozambican health minister Ivo Garrido said that, as part of the government’s HIV prevention strategy, the health ministry will ensure that any man who wants to be circumcised can have the operation performed safely.

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