

Meanwhile in Rwanda

Labiaplasty is a phenomenon that started in the West--specifically, the procedure in which the labia is tightened--became a cultural trend in the United States. It has since been spreading to parts of Europe, especially England, where ladies agree with those in the United States that the procedure heightens one's pleasure during sexual intercourse.

Meanwhile, in Rwanda, they seem to be taking the opposite approach.

In the tiny country, women there are now practicing the stretching of the labia minora, in an attempt to elongate them. Doctors involved in the procedure, especially surgeons from the Netherlands, have emphasized as promotion for their practices, that the women of Rwanda say this procedure -- kind of a reverse labiaplasty -- has positively impacted their sexual pleasure, as well as the pleasure of their male partners.

According to Rwandan women, elongated labia help facilitate a woman's orgasm and can even promote ejaculation. Besides better sexual intercourse, other reasons that they might have stretched their labia were to appear more attractive to their husbands and to make themselves more worthy brides. In an old practice, women were convinced that no man would take her to be his wife unless she practiced stretching, and if she didn't, upon being married her husband might return her to her parents for not having stretched labia. The tradition still exists and causes millions of women to practice stretching their labia every year.

This procedure first came to light as a result of field research being conducted in Rwanda by Marian Koster MSc and Dr. Lisa Price, who hail from the Netherlands' Wageningen University. The two were in Rwanda examining the effects that genocide has had on rural livelihoods.

While there, Koster discovered that girls began pulling their labia--without the aid of a doctor--during puberty in order to elongate their labia. They then eventually graduate to using local medicinal plants provided by plants to help facilitate this pulling, as the plants provide a natural anti-inflammatory and antiseptic affect. Most girls learn the tradition of "gukuna imishino" or stretching of the labia, at a very early age, normally before even being twelve years old. They learn the stretching technique from their mother, other family member or friends and often continue the practice throughout marriage. Most women find their goal labia length to be about two inches long although some women reach a length of four inches.

Koster has told the medical press that she finds this practice interesting, since understanding it will help researchers understand the relationship between females views on sexual pleasure that are not well-documented beyond the Western world. She also said that researchers will be interested in the plants which women use during the elongation process, and the biomedical properties of these plants.

For their part, the World Health Organization has classified the process of elongating the labia in ora as genital mutilation, although this definition is controversial. They are supposed to reconsider this definition soon. And this definition does not apply to labiaplasty.

At bare minimum, the lesson we can learn from this is that women around the world, in all cultures, are interested in increasing sexual stimulation. However, it is never a good idea to begin altering your body by yourself. Fortunately, in the United States, there are trained professionals to help with such procedures. And something like this should definitely be left to the pros.

About the Author

Helen Colen MD is one of the top Board Certified Plastic Surgeon in New York City. Dr. Helen S. Colen has been performing cosmetic plastic surgery and especially [vaginal and labial plastic surgery](#) for the past 25 years.

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