**Health promotion on social media**

**Learning objectives: How to generate, share and recognize fake health science narratives on social media platforms: A social media based simulation play**

In this session you will be introduced to the methods and dynamics of relevance for health promotion on social media.

Each group will battle against another group in a closed social media group and use all means to  promote their specific opinions and views regarding a well-defined dimension of a specific health related debate.

In this role play you will use Facebook as a channel for your arguments. The case is the debate on non-therapeutic male circumcision.

**Background**

In Denmark, the topic and related debate has attracted major attention among e.g. health professionals, researchers, journalists, religious minorities and parliament politicians.  More than 50.000 Danish citizens have now signed a petition and asked the Danish Parliament to vote for or against a ban against non-therapeutic male circumcision (defined as a minimum age of 18 years).  [(please see link for the Danish petition) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.borgerforslag.dk/se-og-stoet-forslag/?Id=FT-00124). It is expected that the Danish Parliament members will vote for/against the ban in 2019.

IMPORTANT: For an introduction to the Danish foreskin debate please read this highly informative article in New York Times: [NYT; 2nd June 2018. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/02/world/europe/denmark-circumcision.html)

It is most likely that a similar health related debate regarding male circumcision will spread to other countries and regions. During the early spring 2018 a similar and very heated debate took place in Iceland (please see: [NYT; 28th February 2018 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/world/europe/circumcision-ban-iceland.html))

Health promotion activities related to male circumcision at Facebook and other public media have driven the public and political opinions and are considered to play a major role in influencing the attitudes, knowledge and decision making.

We will ask you to engage in "the foreskin war" and create your own echo chamber in a closed group at Facebook. The course faciliators will provide you with access to the relevant Facebook group for your foreskin battle. Prior to the role play you need to consider who your targets are; e.g. opponents, politicians, debaters who have not yet made up their mind regarding a ban against male circumcision, health professionals, health advocacy groups, or Ministry of Health etc. Please be aware that in theory all relevant stakeholders will read your discussion threads.

In your battle, please consider to use (e.g.):

* PubMed and Google in order to develop scientific and fake-science based arguments
* emotional narratives
* personal experiences
* profiling/shaming the opponent
* your knowledge regarding fake health science on public and social media, e.g use of "cherry-picking" and "tweaking"

In your battle, you **are not allowed to**:

* block an opponent
* delete inputs or threads

*Disclaimer: Neither the Global Health Section (Department of Public Health), nor University of Copenhagen, is responsible for personal conflicts that may raise as a result of this exercise. Please be aware that this is an internet-based role play game. So please leave the harsh tone and touch arguments in your echo chamber on the net. Thank you!*

**Preliminary time line**

10.15 - 10.30: Introduction to case and exercise / Q & A

10.30 - 10.45: Join the Facebook group: (name of FB group will be announced later)

10.45 - 11.00: Break

11.00 - 11.30: Look up relevant literature and discuss/plan strategy in each group

11.30 - 12.15: The battle is on! (please make notes on personal reflections, observations and experiences all through the exercise)

12.15 - 13.00:  Presentation in class and discussion of FB threads and personal notes

*Here are the main arguments that each group will defend and promote:*

**Group 1**: There is a low risk of acute complications related to non-therapeutic male circumcision

**Group 2:** There is a high risk of acute complications related to non-therapeutic male circumcision

**Group 3:** Non-therapeutic male circumcision does not result in sexual and/or psychological problems

**Group 4:** Non-therapeutic male circumcision does result in sexual and/or psychological problems

**Group 5:** There are health benefits related to male circumcision

**Group 6:** There are no health benefits related to male circumcision

**Group 7:** Will argue for a ban against non-therapeutic male child circumcision

**Group 8:** Will argue against a ban against non-therapeutic male child circumcision

**Reading materials**

*Please notice: It is very important that you are familiar with this literature prior to the role play. Otherwise you will waste time during the play trying to read up on the various sources.*

* About complications related to male circumcision: [Thorup et al. (2013).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640605/download?wrap=1" \o "Thorup et al. (2013).pdf)
* Male circumcision results in sexual problems for both circumcised males and their female partners[: Frisch et al. (2011).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640601/download?wrap=1)
* Male circumcision results in autism:  [Frisch & Simonsen (2015).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640604/download?wrap=1)
* Male circumcision results in a high risk of meatus stenosis: [Frisch & Simonsen (2016).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640600/download?wrap=1)
* Comment to Morten Frisch's studies on male circumcision: ([why Morten Frisch may be wrong; link (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://medium.com/%40circuminfo.dk/intactivism-feeds-anti-semitism-and-islamophobia-in-denmark-2452840510d0))
* A systematic review: Non-therapeutic male circumcision is not associated with sexual problems: [Shabanzadeh et al. (2016).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640603/download?wrap=1" \o "Shabanzadeh et al. (2016).pdf)
* Male circumcision prevents HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases: ([WHO: link (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/malecircumcision/en/))
* The female partner to a circumcised male has lower risk of HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases: [Grund et al. (2017).pdf](https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/30978/files/2640602/download?wrap=1" \o "Grund et al. (2017).pdf)
* Male circumcision results in psychological harm: [(Psychology Today, link) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/moral-landscapes/201501/circumcision-s-psychological-damage)
* A video made and promoted by the Danish Family Planning Association (DFTA). The idea is to motivate Danes to sign the mentioned petition which will motivate the Danish Parliament to vote for or against a ban which will make non-therapeutic male child circumcision illegal: ([DFTA; video link (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Da5gvhQnesb0&h=ATMvbDZe7hzNM8yVXEfxEcSOzMjcW0fbf38D_pFLG0eoHcqDTJ6MUMZpPTTD23wYDpLVFVAqdsxeh1PDkyUhgtq7PWIPiEZJmhPvpjF6uKpNVDHo169F0PPI)).