Imagining Pleasure and Pain:  
a critical discussion of recognition, regulation and  
enjoyment in relation to female genital cutting.

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Abstract: The pleasure of women is not easily recognised or regulated, though many have tried. Law, policy, health, education, religion and media have worked to translate women’s pleasure for consumption, for condemnation and for entertainment. Women’s bodies are imagined as feeling and as behaving in particular ways, and are rarely allowed to stray from proscribed scholarly, juridical or biomedical containers. But women’s pleasure is defiant even if it is not definite.

This scholarly conversation considers women’s pleasure through how it is represented, regulated and experienced in discussions of female genital cutting, female circumcision or what is referred to in law as female genital mutilation.