

AMAFEP - Excision Education Project, Mali



On June 2008, 27 women gathered together for a three-day AMAFEP seminar about the dangers of excision and the health problems faced by excised women. At the end of the three days, Mme Awa Dogoni Dembélé, a health care worker and midwife from the village of Kadiolo, gave this testimony:

"My name is Mme Awa Dogoni Dembélé, and I am a Christian midwife from Kadiolo. My fellow midwife and I have been performing excision on girls in our village for a long time. The centre coordinator forbade this practice but my colleague and I have been doing it on the side without his knowledge because it pays very well. The mothers bring us their daughters, I hold them down, and my colleague excises them. When we are finished, we split the money. I am so grateful to have been a part of this seminar because otherwise I would have continued performing this terrible injustice on our daughters. From now on I am going to fight against the practice of excision in my community!"

Before arriving at the seminar, Mme Dembélé had already scheduled some appointments for excision upon her return to her village. However, what she saw, heard, and learned at the seminar transformed her ideas about this harmful traditional practice.

"This excision training has opened my eyes," she said after the seminar. "Over the years I have treated patients at our clinic who have experienced the gynaecological and obstetric problems we talked about this week, but I never made the connection between these problems and excision. I have assisted many women who have had long, difficult births. Now I know that the scar tissue which forms around the excision causes the problems, making it dangerous for both the mother and the child during the birthing process."

Praise God for Mme Dembélé and others who, through the work of AMAFEP, have the desire to make a difference in the lives of young girls in their communities!