

BACKGROUND

The search for culturally acceptable alternatives to female genital mutilation (FGM) is crucial to the eradication of FGM.

Recent global research even proposes such controversial methods such as female genital alteration (FGA) where the clitoris is pricked or cut a little to only shed blood.

This study sought for the Maa perspective on the acceptable cultural alternatives.

OBJECTIVE

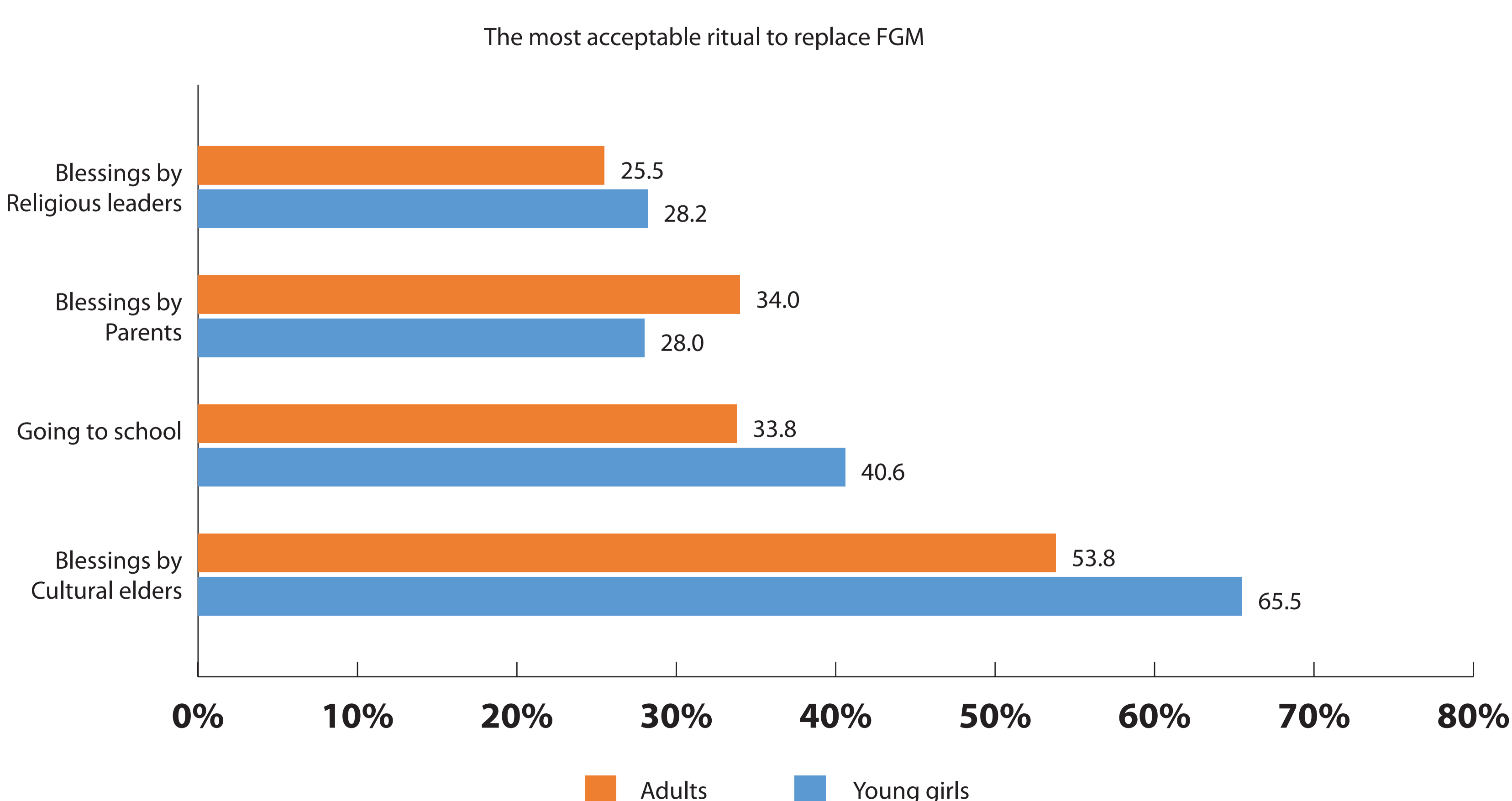
To identify the alternative cultural ritual that Maa communities in Kenya and Tanzania find most culturally acceptable replacement for FGM.

METHODS

A mixed methods cross-sectional cluster survey conducted in four alternative rites of passage (ARP) project areas namely: Magadi, Loitokitok (Kajiado County), Samburu (Samburu County) and Kilindi (Kilindi District) in Tanzania.

A total of 1,386 households were drawn from the ARP clusters and individual interviews were conducted with 489 females; 401 males and 496 young unmarried girls (10-24 years), both circumcised and ARP graduates selected randomly.

In each selected household, one female (15-49 years) or males aged 18 years (Morans 18-30 years and adult men 18 years +) were interviewed interchangeably.



RESULTS

Majority of both the youth and adults reported that blessings by the cultural elders was the most acceptable alternative to FGM

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural elders' blessing is the most acceptable alternative ritual for FGM according to majority of both Maasai girls and adults.

Innovative ways of increasing cultural elders' engagement in community Anti-FGM programmes should be pursued.



Photos showing girls being blessed by cultural elders*

*Constitutes pronouncements of good health, excellence in education, prosperity in many cows and children, longevity of life and God's and people's favour upon a girl's life. These pronouncements are done together with the ritual of pouring milk on the girls that is from a traditional gourd that also has green grass in put in it.