



## **Girl-Child Health Issues: Female Health Rights across the Life Span**

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A Position Statement of the American Association of Health Education (AAHE)

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All females, regardless of their age, nationality or ethnicity, need to be given equal treatment in terms of health education and health care. To ensure the rights of the females, especially those of the girl-child (female children and adolescents), all health services and programs need to commit to gender equality. Community strategies that support and protect the rights of women and children relating to environmental sustainability, equal access to education and information, and equal access to health services, need to be developed and maintained to allow individuals to reach their full potential and to ensure good health of females across the life span.<sup>1</sup>

Under the Convention of the Rights of the Child, girls up to 18 years of age are considered children with special human rights.<sup>2</sup> However, in many countries, the girl-child is at risk of poor health outcomes due to economic and social discrimination throughout the lifespan.<sup>1,3,4</sup> As a result, fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood and the health of the girl-child is far below that of male counterparts. Some examples of issues compromising the health of the girl-child include female genital mutilation, female infanticide, sexual abuse, domestic violence, early and forced marriages, lack of educational opportunities, lack of health services, and gender discrimination.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

The American Association for Health Education supports the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations working domestically and internationally to develop community strategies and policies that protect and promote environmental sustainability, access to education, health care services and gender equality for females across the lifespan.

### **References**

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