Circumcising cuts off the best part...

In their 1966 book "Human Sexual Response", William H. Masters, MD, and Virginia E. Johnson include one short paragraph in which they cursorily describe a study of comparative penis sensitivity, measuring mainly the glans, and concluding there was “No... difference.” But in the April 2007 issue of BJU International, a study was published that accomplished what Masters and Johnson purported to have done over 40 years ago. By looking at the ENTIRE penis, including the foreskin, Sorrells et al found that:

- Several places on the foreskin are considerably more sensitive than anywhere on the circumcised penis (points 3, 4, 13, 14 below)
- The glans is not the most sensitive part of the penis, but rather, among the least sensitive (points 8, 9, 10, 11)
- The most sensitive part of a circumcised penis is the foreskin’s remnants and scar (point 19)

...contrary to Masters & Johnson

“The phallic fallacy” that the uncircumcised man can establish ejaculatory control more effectively than his circumcised counterpart was accepted almost universally as biologic fact by both circumcised and uncircumcised male study subjects. This concept was founded on the widespread misconception that the exquisitely sensitive glans is more sensitive to the exteroreceptive stimuli of coition or masturbation than is the glans protected by the residual foreskin. Therefore, the circumcised man has been presumed to have more difficulty with ejaculatory control and (as many study subjects believed) a greater tendency towards premature ejaculation, particularly directed toward the glans.

In view of its historical significance, our finding that Masters and Johnson’s conclusion might be based upon a 40-year-old misunderstanding of what constitutes normal intact penile sex sensations, re-examining their data and documents, and investigating the tools that were available that fit their loose description. We also interviewed William Masters just before his death in 2001, as well as his close associates. No one remembered this study.

We concluded it is extremely unlikely that Masters and Johnson used any tests that would have allowed them to discern a two-sided difference in sensitivity, as they claim.

But what WERE those experiments?

We attempted to determine precisely what type of data Masters and Johnson’s conclusion might be based upon. We read carefully their publications and other relevant documents, and investigated the tools that were available that fit their loose description. We also interviewed William Masters just before his death in 2001, as well as his close associates. No one remembered this study.

We concluded it is extremely unlikely that Masters and Johnson used any tests that would have allowed them to discern a two-sided difference in sensitivity, as they claim. At best, Masters and Johnson found that circumcised penises are not more sensitive than intact penises – a one-sided result. In fact, all other relevant studies (historical, qualitative, etc.) suggest that circumcised penises are actually significantly less sensitive than normal intact penises, but this would not have been shown up on the tests that were likely used. Thus, Masters and Johnson’s published conclusion of “no difference” is, at best, sloppy wording.