

Viewpoint: Battles over ‘virginity testing’ and ‘virginity-restoration surgery’ reveal the persistence of dangerous pseudoscience

Some girls are born without a hymen, while others tear the membrane long before they have sex, most commonly by exercising or, today, by using tampons.

Yet the demand for virginity testing—typically, a gynecological exam in which a doctor looks for the presence of a hymen—has proved surprisingly durable.

In 1979, the British government performed one on a 35-year-old Indian woman who had traveled to London to get married, in order “to see whether she was, in fact, a bona fide virgin.”

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Virginity tests are not just degrading—they are also useless. The World Health Organization is clear: “There is no scientific merit to, or clinical indication for ‘virginity testing’ or to a ‘virginity examination.’”

In addition to hymen inspections, the other main method is the “two-finger test” to check the tightness of the vagina. These tests are much more invasive, but equally pointless.

That’s why the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s government recently committed to making virginity tests illegal.

Richard Holden, a young Conservative member of Parliament, has proposed an amendment criminalizing the practice in a bill.... He found [21 clinics offering](#) the procedure in the United Kingdom, charging up to £300 (\$410) for a virginity certificate.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)