

# Over 5,000 men respond to #ZwakalaSkeem medical circumcision campaign

After soapie star and Brothers for Life ambassador Kagiso Modupe - champion of the Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) campaign branded #ZwakalaSkeem, meaning 'come with me brother' - called on 2,000 men to get medically circumcised with him, South African men has responded in droves.



Kagiso Modupe meets a circumcision doctor

The initiative is being driven by the USAID-funded Voluntary MMC consortium comprising Right to Care, CHAPS, and SACTWU. Dr Khumbulani Moyo, medical male circumcision manager for the consortium says, "Around 5,000 men responded directly to our campaign which highlights the health benefits of medical male circumcision. This means the total number of MMCs done during this period is over 5,000. We are encouraged by the number of men that came forward. This is two and a half times more men than we anticipated."

Modupe is well known for his role in the soapie Scandal. He was circumcised at the Katlehong North Municipal Clinic in March as part of a celebratory community event in Katlehong, Gauteng. Meanwhile, men in other parts of Gauteng, North West, KZN, and Mpumalanga were sending 'please call me's' to 082 808 6152 to book for their circumcisions at one of the 150 participating clinics spread across these regions.

Medical male circumcision is proven to reduce the risk for men and women of getting infected by HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and to reduce the risk for cervical, anal and prostate cancer. But barriers to MMC remain high.

## Bringing issues out in the open

Says Moyo: "Kagiso, who is 33, showed that men are never too old to have the procedure. He brought issues that men have out into the open and talked about them. As well as age, these include pain, the six-week healing period, abstaining from sex or masturbation, and traditional circumcision vs medical circumcision that many men still battle with.

“There is certainly place for both medical and traditional male circumcision. Each man can choose for himself but Modupe has helped promote the significant health benefits of having the procedure.”

Modupe shared his post-MMC six-week healing period with communities in Rustenburg, North West, last month. “I hope that by openly sharing my circumcision experience, I can help more men overcome their fears and preconceived ideas about medical circumcision. I have learned so much and I hope that I passed this knowledge on for men to make the right choice for themselves and their partners,” he said.

“Modupe has been a brave and powerful messenger,” said Moyo. “By being so open about his own experience, he has shown how easy it is to deal with the initial discomfort of circumcision.”

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