

Do Now

Why are virginity testing and hymenoplasty illegal?

Zain just told his friends that his dad wants him to have an arranged marriage - and also wants to make sure his new wife is a virgin. Zain says, 'Dad reckons you wouldn't eat a sweet that someone else took the wrapper off and put back. I know that sounds gross, but that's what he said.'

Discuss: How would this analogy between a woman and a sweet make Zain and his friends feel, do you think? How does it make you feel?

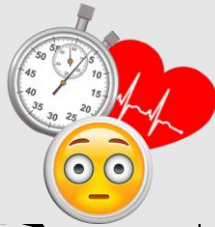


What do you think we mean by the terms 'virginity testing' and 'hymenoplasty'?

I think these terms mean...

Why are virginity testing and hymenoplasty illegal?

Learning outcomes



Describe what we mean by virginity testing and hymenoplasty.

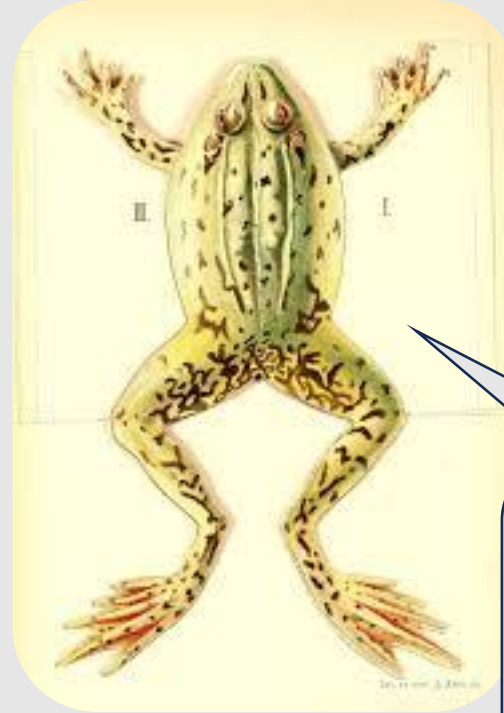
Explain why these are illegal in the UK and how these pseudoscientific concepts help perpetuate misogyny.

Virginity testing – A pseudoscientific practice and process of determining whether a woman or girl is a virgin.

Pseudoscientific – fake science (can't really be done or doesn't actually work).

Hymenoplasty - temporary surgical restoration of the hymen, which can be lost in females through sport, sex or just inserting a tampon.

The analogy of wanting a virgin wife, and not wanting *'a sweet someone had taken the wrapper off and put back'* might be a new idea to you. We hope so. However, unfortunately, this is a very **common analogy** in some old-fashioned and **very patriarchal cultures**. It's an attitude that dates back millennia, to times when humans still stoned people to death in the streets and dissected animals to try and predict the future from looking at their insides.



*It's going to rain tomorrow, ok?
Now please put that scalpel away!*

Did you know?

The experts at the World Health Organisation all agree it is impossible to tell whether a woman (or anyone, in fact) is a virgin or not.

Why are virginity testing and hymenoplasty illegal?



Why are we focusing on virginity testing and hymenoplasty today anyway? Well, there are many good reasons for this. Read the statements below and vote to see if you think they are true or false as a class. **We'll reveal the answers on the next slide.**

The hymen is a thin membrane that partially covers the entrance to the vagina. A virgin female may or may not have an intact hymen.

In 2022, virginity testing and hymenoplasty was classified by the UK government as 'honour-based abuse.'

In 2019, 8000 women were shown to have Googled 'hymenoplasty in the UK'.

(89%) of women in the UK who wanted a hymenoplasty were found to be asking for one because they feared repercussions if they were perceived not to be virgins.

It is illegal to carry out, offer or aid and abet virginity testing or hymenoplasty in any part of the UK. These offences carry extra territorial jurisdiction and carry a maximum sentence of 5 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

Why are virginity testing and hymenoplasty illegal?



Let's see how many we were right about.

All except one of the statements were true. Unfortunately, this is only because it was actually 9000 times it was Googled, not 8000.

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What is cultural relativism?

Cultural relativism is the idea that we can't morally judge the norms of other cultures, as there is no agreed benchmark to measure cultural norms against. Measuring them against your own (let's say against Western culture), would imply you thought Western culture should be the benchmark.

However – countries globally subscribe to the idea of **Human Rights**. You have a Human Right not to be abused, physically, or in any other sense. When we see Human Rights abuse **in any culture**, we should call it out.



How is virginity testing a symptom of deeper problems in a culture?



Watch the following clip and complete the questions on your answer sheet. Your teacher will then go through the answers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0h3QZLRQKQ>

How did Mya and her brother follow different paths?

Why was this? The clip doesn't state it, so think about it.



What do Mya's family think will happen if she has a relationship prior to marriage?

Why are 'virginity test' and 'proven' in inverted commas?

What percentage of females who ARE virgins do not have intact hymens?

How do you think virginity testing in a culture could be an indication of deeper problems within that culture?

Let's go through the answers together.

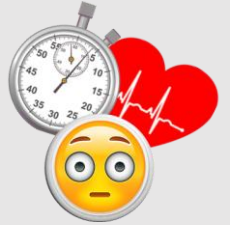
Don't forget to correct any you didn't get right the first time.

How did Mya and her brother follow different paths?

Mya has to conform to family (cultural) expectations. Her brother has far more freedom. She cannot attend university and he can, for example.

Why was this? The clip doesn't state it, so think about it.

Tradition, patriarchal norms, maybe religious values.



What do Mya's family think will happen if she has a relationship prior to marriage?

She will bring shame on her family. They will lose family honour.

Why are 'virginity test' and 'proven' in inverted commas?

Because it's pseudoscience and you cannot test for virginity.

What percentage of females who ARE virgins do not have intact hymens?

50%

How do you think virginity testing in a culture could be an indication of deeper problems within that culture?

It shows that in that culture, a woman's worth is based around a male's sexual perception of her.

Year 11 Spring 2 – Health and Wellbeing: Knowledge Check

Theme: Neurodiversity, Personal Safety, Sugar & Processed Foods, Suicide Prevention, Virginity Testing & Hymenoplasty

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain what neurodiversity means and why it's important to recognise it in others and ourselves?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can identify key ways to stay personally safe when out in public or unfamiliar environments?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can describe the health risks associated with excessive sugar and processed food consumption?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can recognise signs that someone may be at risk of suicide and how to respond supportively?
5. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can identify myths and facts about suicide and understand its link to mental health conditions such as depression?
6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain what virginity testing and hymenoplasty are, and why these practices are illegal and harmful?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can analyse how cultural and patriarchal norms can contribute to gender-based abuse and discrimination?
8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain how societal and media messages can shape harmful expectations around gender and sexuality?
9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can identify where and how to access help and support for mental health or safety concerns?
10. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain how to challenge discrimination and support a culture of safety, equality, and respect?

Spring 2 - Yr11 Health and Wellbeing Knowledge Check



Reporting a Concern at Thornden School

- It is important to us that all of you feel safe, happy and belong at Thornden.
- We also know that sometimes it is not as easy as simply telling a member of staff
- It could be:
 - A friend you are worried about
 - Someone being unkind to you
 - Something you have heard and think we should know

How can you report anything you are worried about?

- Speak to a member of staff or parent / carer
- Visit the Well Being Den or Head of Year area
- On Satchel each week you will be sent a link to a form to share any worries you have
- On our school website homepage there is a 'Report a Concern' link.
- In the Student Bulletin there is a 'Report a Concern' link
- On all school desktops there is a 'Report a Concern' logo to click and report anything

Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



Mental Health & Low Mood

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>

Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

Talk to Someone

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.

Wellbeing Team and School Nurse

Report a Concern on Satchel

Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

Healthy Lifestyle

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>

Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

Apps That Can Help

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.

Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.

Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people)

MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

Eating Concerns

Beat Eating Disorders –

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>

NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>