

THE BUTEBO MAN FOR WHOM TWINS SIMPLY KEEP COMING

Fathering twins is often seen as a blessing but for James Moding, it is a way of life. He has six sets of twins, with curious neighbours attributing it to magic. While Moding calls it "God's mercy," doctors say genetics and hyperovulation may explain why some families keep welcoming twins generation after generation. **Ibrahm Ruhweza** writes

What are the chances of having twins in your family line, let alone six sets born to one father? In Butebo district, one village health team member is living exactly that reality.

"Our first children were twin girls," James Moding says. Coming from a family of 10 where no one else was a twin, the news took him by surprise. "My father has no twins. Only his sister has one set," he explains. When his first twins were born, the family celebrated wildly, and he proudly embraced the title Ssalongo — the Luganda word for father of twins.

The cycle of having twins never stopped; his second, third, fourth, and fifth children were also twins. Moding has six sets of twins — 12 children in total. Curious locals began to wonder whether he was using magic, especially those who had desired to have twins of their own.

"But there was no magic in this, and I have nothing to say about that. Surely, I cannot lie to you; it was just God's mercy and love," he says. "I just see twins coming," he adds.

Moding admits that the financial stress of caring for this large number of children has been the family planning he needed. For now, he and his wife have decided to stop having more children.

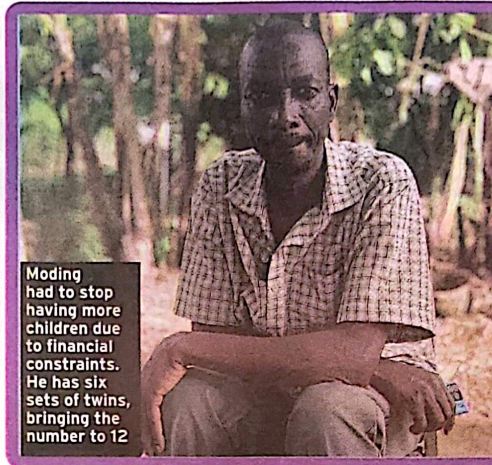
His biggest fear was the children falling ill at once, but he says they were fortunate, as the children rarely get sick.

In Kyenjojo district, Katooke sub-county, businessman Patrick Akugizibwe has also made a name for himself as a twin scorer. He has six sets of twins, though from different women. His first set died before they turned four years old; the other five sets are alive. Moding and Akugizibwe believe that having multiple sets of twins is a gift from God for a special few.

Akugizibwe traces the lineage of twins back through his family. His first uncle had twins, and among his grandchildren is a set of twins. His brother, Charles Mwesige, also fathered twins.

THE SCIENCE

Former ministry of health director of general health services, Dr. Francis Omaswa, says for one person to have many sets of twins is a result of

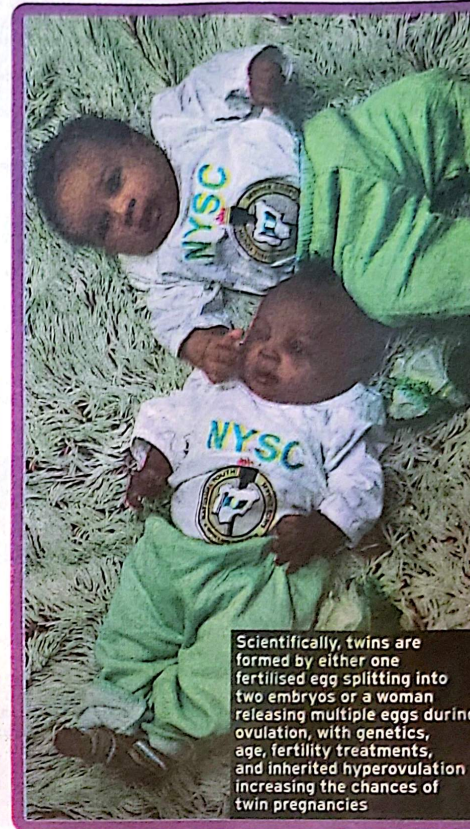


Moding had to stop having more children due to financial constraints. He has six sets of twins, bringing the number to 12

genetic factors. He explains that some twins can be identical, while others may not be. Identical twins form when one fertilised egg splits into two embryos, meaning they share nearly 100% of their DNA and are always the same sex.

Dr. Omaswa adds that fraternal twins form when two separate eggs are fertilised by two different sperm cells, meaning they share approximately 50% of their DNA — like regular siblings — and can be the same or different sexes.

Dr. Mutahi Muzafar, an obstetrician-gynaecologist at Rubaga Hospital, explains that some families inherit genes that make women more likely to release more than one egg during ovulation. When this genetic tendency is combined with naturally high fertility, the chances of having twins increase significantly. As a result, some extended families may have unusually high numbers of twin births, sometimes five or six sets across generations.



Scientifically, twins are formed by either one fertilised egg splitting into two embryos or a woman releasing multiple eggs during ovulation, with genetics, age, fertility treatments, and inherited hyperovulation increasing the chances of twin pregnancies

FURTHER SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION

According to a 2016 study by Hamdi Mbarek titled Identification of Common Genetic Variants Influencing Spontaneous Dizygotic Twinning and Female Fertility, one of the main biological causes of repeated twin births is a phenomenon known as hyperovulation. This occurs when a woman's ovaries release more than one egg during a single menstrual cycle. As a result, two separate eggs can be fertilised by different sperm at the same time, leading to fraternal (dizygotic) twins.

Dr. Abner Magoola, a retired paediatrician from Jinja Referral Hospital, also says people who use fertility tablets or herbal remedies stand a high chance of having twins or triplets.

"It is scientifically proven that the more you take fertility tablets, the higher your chances

of having twins," he says.

Hyperovulation increases the likelihood of twin pregnancies and can occur at a higher rate in some women due to inherited genetic tendencies that influence how the ovaries respond to hormonal signals. In families with a history of fraternal twins, the trait appears to recur more often, suggesting that certain genes affecting ovulation may be passed down through the maternal line. While specific genes have been difficult to identify conclusively, research and expert findings describe genetics as a key factor in why some women naturally hyperovulate and repeatedly conceive twins.

A 2016 study by Hamdi Mbarek at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands found that certain inherited genes increase a woman's chances of having fraternal twins.

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