

How drama has helped Kabarole fight malaria



On duty. Mr Peter Amanyire, the officer-in-charge Kasenda (centre) Health Centre III, listens to a resident asking a question after a drama presentation on how to use mosquito nets in Rwakenzi Village in Kabarole District recently. PHOTO BY ALEX ASHABA

The method. A team of health workers move around the district dramatising proper use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

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KABAROLE. Health authorities in Kabarole District are using drama to sensitise people on the effective use of mosquito nets to fight malaria.

The method has brought malaria cases down in the district as confirmed by the district health officers.

This year alone, Kabarole District received 635,320 insecticide-treated mosquito nets from government through Ministry of Health.

According to the Kabarole District health officer, Dr Richard Mugahi, the new approach to fighting malaria has helped the district to reduce the number of malaria cases.

Dr Mugahi said the district is

going to carry out an operation to arrest all people found misusing the distributed mosquito nets.

On the success of the programme, Dr Mugahi said: "Much as drama has reduced the prevalence of malaria cases in some areas, the rate of deaths in the whole district is still high. We are still compiling data about malaria cases in the whole district."

Mr Peter Amanyire, the officer-in-charge of Kasenda Health Centre III in Kasenda Sub-county, said since the start of the drama approach, the number of malaria cases, especially among pregnant mothers at the facility, had dropped from about five per day to two. Through drama, residents, especially pregnant mothers are urged to sleep under insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

Kabarole District health authorities in partnership with Programme for Accessible Communication Education (PACE) Uganda, a health non-governmental organisation, early this year embraced the use of drama

MALARIA CASES

According to statistics from the Ministry of Health, malaria is still the leading cause of death in Uganda, accounting for more than 27 per cent of deaths in the country. The statistics also show that Uganda has the world's highest malaria incidence, with a rate of 478 cases per 1,000 population per year.

by moving around especially to parts of the district with high malaria prevalence.

According to Ms Catherine Kemigabo, the district health educator, through drama, the district has registered drop in the number of malaria cases by about 40 per cent.

Ms Kemigabo said the reduction was due to the sensitisation about malaria prevention through emphasis to sleep under insecticide treated mosquito nets.

The drama groups that consist of health workers and other members of the community, move around the district giving out

information about how to use mosquito nets to fight malaria as opposed to the routine approach of sitting in the health facilities to treat patients.

People are also allowed to ask questions related to health issues and get instant response from health workers.

"We can't watch our people continue suffering from malaria. We have resorted to drama groups because the information is easily received by people. We usually register big turn ups wherever we camp," Ms Kemigabo said.

Mr John Musiime from Kyakagusa village, Kichwamba Sub-county, said through drama, he has been able to get clear information on how to use a mosquito to fight malaria in his family.

"Over years, we have been receiving mosquito nets and health workers have not been following to see whether people use them in a proper way," he said.

According to the 2014 National Population Housing Census report, 94.4 per cent of households in Kabarole District own mosquito nets.

While commemorating Malaria Day in Fort Portal Town in April, Dr Sarah Opendi, the State Minister for Health in charge of General Duties, directed Resident District Commissioners to arrest all people found misusing the government distributed mosquito nets.

She said government has a target of kicking out malaria in Uganda by 2020 and that this can only be achieved when people start sleeping under insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

Mr Sam Mugisha, the programmes director of the drama group, said they decided to use drama after seeing a rise in the number of people suffering from malaria.

Ms Anent Kasiime, a village health team member for Nyantaboma in Harugongo Sub-county, said drama by health workers has helped them to spread more information about malaria prevention.

"People over the years have been receiving mosquito nets, especially pregnant mothers. However, a big number of them have a myth that when you sleep under the net, it causes itching, which the health experts have been explaining as false," Ms Kasiime said.

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ce of the Prime Min-
they called illegal

Minister urges officials

KABAROLE: The State Minister for Primary Health Care, Ms Joyce Moriku Kaducu, has asked health authorities in the Rwenzori to explore new strategies to end

30-year-old man on the run

KAGADI: Police in Kagadi District are hunting for a 30-year-old man for allegedly attempting to exhume the body of his son who died two years ago. The

Mother, daughter arrested

MBARARA: Police in Mbarara District are holding a 36-year-old woman and her 20-year-old daughter over the death of her husband. Agaba Wilson, who had a mental illness, went missing