

Namuwaya in pain at Kigandalo Health Centre IV

Mayuge decry low access to maternal services

MAYUGE

By Betty Angatai

Nineteen-year-old Annet Namuwaya, a mother of one, lost her baby when she delivered at home. She could have saved the baby, had she delivered from a health facility.

The resident of Bugumya village in Bukabooli sub-county, Mayuge district, developed a complication while giving birth.

"I had sharp pains, but when time for pushing came, the labour pains stopped. I lost my baby in the process because the people who were helping me did not know what to do," she said.

After delivering under the care of her relatives, Namuwaya bled almost to death, but was saved when she was taken to Kigandalo Health Centre IV, Mayuge district.

Dr. Ibrahim Gwaluka, the officer in charge of Bunya East health services, said access to maternal services is still low, despite several initiatives.

Speaking during the Constituency Health Task Force meeting organised by James Kiwalabye, the Member of Parliament for Bunya East at Kigandalo Health Centre IV on Monday, Gwaluka said few mothers have access to maternal and child health services at health facilities.

According to the Bunya East constituency's maternal health report of last October, in Bukabooli, 12.4% mothers delivered in health facilities, in Mpungwe, 7% and in Buwaya, 24.8%," Gwaluka said the statistics were very low, compared to the national target of 60%. The report also reveals that few mothers attend the first antenatal services

during the first trimester. Gwaluka also decried the high prevalence rates of malaria.

"Malaria is still a killer disease in Bunya East constituency and Mayuge district. Malaria positivity rate in some health centres is at 86.6% and among children, ranges from 79% to 100%," Gwaluka said. He noted that most people do not sleep under mosquito nets, despite the Government's initiative of distributing free mosquito nets.

Kiwalabye asked the Government to embark on indoor spraying, so as to fight malaria.

"The Government has distributed mosquito nets on several occasions, but most people do not sleep under them. Some are instead using them as fishing nets and others for fencing off vegetable farms and poultry," he said.

Kiwalabye, however, was also concerned about the low rates at which expectant mothers were accessing maternal services at health facilities. He asked the health ministry to upgrade the health centres in the vulnerable communities of Bukabooli and Mpungwe to enable increased access to services.

Gwaluka noted that they have no ambulance to transport patients to other hospitals, where they can access better treatment.

He said each patient referred for further management has to get their means of transport to access better treatment in a referral hospital.

He asked the Government to provide them with ambulances, in order to save people's lives.

Kapandu Mukuve, a councillor for Bugoto parish in Bukabooli sub-county, decried the poor state of health centres due to lack of primary health care fund.