

Endometriosis: A silent growing condition affecting women

BY OLIVIER MUKAAYA

MBALE. Health experts have raised concern over a little known but increasingly common menstrual condition known as endometriosis that is affecting women.

This condition has left several women in chronic pain, emotional distress, and in some cases, unable to conceive.

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the womb.

This abnormal growth triggers intense pelvic pain, particularly during menstruation, and can lead to complications such as infertility, depression and reduced productivity.

Dr Lilian Tumusiime, a gynecologist specialising in endometriosis, says the condition, which is often misunder-

stood and misdiagnosed, is frequently mistaken for ordinary menstrual cramps, allowing it to progress undetected.

"Endometriosis predominantly affects women in their reproductive years. The symptoms can include extremely painful periods, chronic fatigue, and in some cases, women faint or become bedridden every month," she says.

Despite its severity, the condition remains largely under-reported with many women suffering in silence due to limited awareness and access to proper diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Tumusiime says the consequences of delayed diagnosis can be devastating.

"For many women, by the time they receive accurate medical attention, the disease might have significantly advanced, which is not good," she says.



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Dr Tumusiime says the treatment for endometriosis varies depending on the severity of the condition and a patient's fertility goals.

"Over the counter pain relievers, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, can help manage mild to moderate pain. For more severe cases, stronger prescription medication may be re-

quired," she explains.

Hormonal therapies are also widely used to suppress the growth of endometrial tissue and reduce symptoms.

However, medics say in more advanced cases, surgical intervention becomes necessary.

Ms Sharon Namataka is among those who endured years of suffering before learning the truth about her condition.

As a young girl, she frequently missed school due to debilitating pain.

"I would be confined to bed for days. At one point, doctors even suspected tumors in my uterus," she recalls.

She explains that after undergoing surgery in Mbale Regional Referral Hospital, she was diagnosed with endometriosis.

Dr Denis Mabonga, a medical expert, says minimally invasive procedures such as laparoscopy can help remove

endometrial lesions and improve fertility outcomes.

"This procedure involves removing or destroying the abnormal tissue through small abdominal incisions. It can significantly relieve pain and improve chances of conception," he says.

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Dr Mabonga points out that the cost of laparoscopic surgery ranges between Shs10 million and Shs30 million, making it unaffordable for many women.

He emphasises the urgent need for awareness and early detection as many health workers still lack the training to accurately identify the condition.