



Admitted. A mother with her malnourished child at Arua Regional Referral Hospital recently. PHOTO BY CLEMENT ALUMA

Malnutrition soars as food shortage bites

Issue. Mothers say they feed their children on what is available because of food scarcity.

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ARUA. As one enters the nutrition ward at Arua Regional Referral Hospital, they are welcomed by the grim image of pale looking children with sunken eyes and brown hair.

These children are among the many countrywide suffering malnutrition as a result of food scarcity and poor food combinations.

Speaking to *Daily Monitor* about the fate of their children, some of the mothers complain about lack of enough breast milk to feed their babies.

They are seeking support. But they are not any better

as they are malnourished as well.

The situation at Arua hospital is not different from that of Ediofe Health Centre, which receives the highest cases of malnutrition among children from Pajulu and Adumi sub-counties.

A nurse who spoke to this reporter on condition of anonymity said: "The problem here is that you have to treat the mother and the child since they come when they are both malnourished."

The former officer in-charge of Arua hospital, Ms Rita Ondoa, said: "Illiteracy, ignorance and poverty among mothers are the major cause of malnutrition in children. It is important that mothers know what type of food supplements to give to children."

Ms Sarah Munduru, a resident of Adumi Sub-county said: "What we give to the children is what we eat. One can be financially constrained to even buy food."

According to statistics, more than 30 cases have been registered at Arua hospital since the beginning of this month. The nurses said they receive about 10 new cases weekly. Last week, 56 children were admitted to the facility, out of which two severe cases were referred to Mulago hospital.

CAUSE

Diet. Malnutrition occurs when a person does not receive adequate nutrients from diet. This causes damage to the vital organs and functions of the body. Lack of food is the most cause of malnutrition in the poorer countries.