

Life of a doctor on a meagre pay

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KAMPALA. Dr Elly Aniku, an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Kawempe General Referral Hospital, did not turn up for work to attend to expectant mothers yesterday.

He is heeding the call for industrial action by the Uganda Medical Association (UMA) due to poor working conditions and low pay.

Dr Aniku wants government to create a clear mechanism to improve medical services before they can end their strike.

"We want a collective bargaining agreement that is binding and we expect government to pay us new salaries as soon as we reach a consensus," he said.

The father of one said his monthly net pay of Shs970,000, is insufficient.

The sum includes about Shs66,000 for lunch allowance, which was provided after the



If I wanted a decent and befitting house, I might end up paying about 50 per cent of my monthly salary yet I have other needs to attend to," DAN ELLY ANIKU, OBSTETRICIAN AND GYNAECOLOGIST AT KAWEMPE HOSPITAL

1995 doctors' strike.

Dr Aniku said he uses part of his salary to rent a house in Kyebando, a Kampala suburb.

"I take care of four people, including one child and other three dependents," he said, adding that he also needs money to fuel his car and pay Shs1.2m for his child's school fees per term.

Asked about the ideal salary, Dr Aniku said UMA has set Shs5m as a bare minimum for a medical officer on top of other allowances.

However, Dr Aniku said the most important demand is the availability of enough and timely medicine, equipment, and supplies at health facilities.

"For instance, when you go to Kawempe, there are no cannulas, giving sets and urine bags required to deliver a mother who needs a caesarean section," he said.

Dr Aniku said their current pay does not include medical insurance yet they also fall sick like any other Ugandan.

He hopes politicians and other Ugandans will be able to seek services at Mulago hospital after the government has fulfilled their demands that are aimed at improving the healthcare system in the country. "I look forward to a Mulago where politicians are able to come for treatment," Dr Aniku said.