

Joy, pain as 59-year-old delivers four babies

Support. For most of the procedures, including the operation to deliver the babies, Magadaline Namakula has relied on good Samaritans for financial assistance.

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Magadaline Namakula, 59, had given up on giving birth having tried in vain during her earlier years. Her husband of 20 years had divorced her for not conceiving.

She moved back to her parents' home in Mubende District. Recurrent fibroids, which at times required to be removed through operation, drained her purse.

"That one (2016 fibroid attack) I just prayed. I said let God heal me because I do not have money. Even Charles (a relative) does not have money," Namakula says.

Falling in love

Years later, Namakula fell in love again with a man, whose identity she is keen to conceal. And then something happened.

"I got sick and grew so thin. I thought I had a strange disease that was eating me up. Doctors made many scans and tests on me and until I was brought to Mulago hospital only to be told I was pregnant," she says.

She was a bundle of agony and ecstasy on receiving the news. But her pregnancy was not an ordinary one. She was carrying quadruplets during



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what were supposed to be her post-menopausal years.

"Women conceive and they develop big stomachs but mine was small although I had four babies inside," she says.

Things got worse when she developed heart problems. She was referred to Mulago Heart Institute

where she was treated for free because of her condition. That phase passed.

Caesarean operation

Then on Tuesday night, she started bleeding profusely and was booked into the operation theater at Kawempe hospital, a satellite facility

of Mulago National Referral Hospital.

One of the four babies died in the womb before the caesarean operation that eventually delivered three live babies and the dead one. The smallest weighed 1.4kg and one of the health workers, who attended to her, says all the three live babies had a good chance of survival. But two later died and by the time we visited her on Friday, only one was alive.

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MAGADALINE NAMAKULA

"I will not cry anymore. It is God, who gave me these babies and it is Him taking them. Let His will prevail," Namakula says.

Support

She was not keen to tell the story of how she beat science to conceive at such an advanced age, insisting it was God's intervention.

With modern science such as In vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment, one can be assisted to conceive, and such services are available in Uganda. Such a service, however, is very expensive and would be beyond the reach of a person like Namakula.

For most of the procedures, including the operation to deliver the babies, she has relied on good Samaritans for financial assistance.

Delivered. Magadaline Namakula lies on her hospital bed at Kawempe General Hospital on Friday. PHOTO BY PAUL TAJUBA