

After 55 years, Bugiri finally gets diagnostic centre to fight rising NCDs

BY ASUMAN MUSOBYA

Bugiri. After 55 years of waiting, Bugiri District has finally secured a diagnostic centre to help tackle the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Bugiri General Hospital, built between 1967 and 1971 under the Obote I government, has operated without a diagnostic centre and major rehabilitation since it opened.

Patients have had to travel to Jinja and Mbale regional referral hospitals, or even to facilities in Kenya for tests and scans.

District leaders said the gap has worsened as NCDs such as cancer, hyperten-

sion and diabetes rise alongside infectious illnesses.

"The rise in non-communicable diseases is attributed to smoking, alcohol consumption and the abuse of drugs," said the Bugiri District Assistant Health Officer, Mr Robert Mutumba Musenze.

He said the hospital also struggles with shortages of drugs for NCDs.

However, relief is now coming through, thanks to the Smart African Village Development Consortium, under a non-governmental organisation known as SADO.

"We are grateful that we are now going to have these services brought to us by SADO. But we request for additional drugs and other medical supplies," Mr Mutumba said.



Impact.

"We have been offering these services for three years, and over 20,000 people have received medical care.

We request other partners to lend a helping hand so that we save our people."

District vice-chairperson Godfrey Dongo

He urged the government to recruit more doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers to fill staffing gaps.

The Bugiri District Vice Chairperson, Mr Godfrey Dongo, said the district has been running annual health camps for three

years to cover complicated cases, major operations, cancer screening and counselling at no cost.

"We have been offering these services for three years, and over 20,000 people have received medical care. We request other partners to lend a helping hand so that we save our people," Mr Dongo said.

The SADO executive director, Dr Nelson Muzira Mugubira, said the diagnostic centre's construction will start soon and should be completed before the end of the year. "We have all the necessary requirements for construction, and we shall also provide all the required equipment for the centre. Therefore, we call upon local leaders in this district to cooperate with us to ensure our people benefit from

the project," Dr Muzira said.

The project will equip 76 health centres and four general hospitals, including Jinja, Kamuli, Iganga and Mayuge Health Centre IV. It will also be piloted in southwestern Uganda and Lango.

The district woman councillor for Kapyanga Sub-county, Ms Sylvia Amukawoto, urged the government to deploy more midwives in rural health centres.

She said poor roads prevent many expectant mothers from reaching Bugiri General Hospital for antenatal care.

"This is one of the biggest challenges women are facing in rural areas, and some of them are now turning to traditional birth attendants for herbal medicines."