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Globally, the World Health Organisation estimates that more than 200 million girls and women have been cut in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where FGM is concentrated”
Uganda banned FGM in 2009

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tion and access to education, a lot
still wants to make the vice history.
“Even as we count our achievements, we need to reaffirm our commitment to go the extra mile to eradicate FGM completely by

the p-
tricts.
He said Sabiny elders should seek alternatives to FGM as a rite of passage but urged them to preserve other positive cultures.



Concerned. Members of Parliament from the health committee interact with some of the teenage girls at Budaka Health Centre recently. PHOTO BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA

Budaka grapples with teenage pregnancy

Worrying. The officer-in-charge of Budaka Health Centre IV, Dr John Wogabaga, said the increasing rate at which young girls are delivering babies in the district is worrying.

BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA
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BUDAKA. Primary Seven candidates have about two months to sit Primary Living Examinations, but some pupils in Budaka District have dropped out of school after discovering that they are pregnant.

According to the Budaka District health report, which was launched at Budaka Health Centre IV, last Friday, 24.7 per cent of teenage girls get pregnant before the age of 19.

The officer-in-charge of Budaka Health Centre IV, Dr John Wogabaga, said the increasing rate at which young girls are delivering babies in the district is worrying.

“It is a challenge before us and it calls for attention from various stakeholders to fight it,” Dr Wogabaga said. He said on a monthly basis, the health centre records show that more than 30 teenagers deliver at the facility.

“Young girls come to deliver al-

most on a daily basis at this facility. They deliver in pain and severe complications await them,” he added.

Giving birth at an early age, Dr Wogabaga said, makes teen mothers more susceptible to health complications such as over bleeding while giving birth, high chances of infant

INTERVENTIONS

Help. The Budaka District Woman MP, Pamela Kamugo, said urgent interventions from government and other development partners are needed in order to curb the increasing teenage pregnancy.

and maternal mortality.

Mr Robert Kabigi, a resident of Budaka Town council, said teenage pregnancy tremendously affects the family in terms of finances.

“The relatives and parents are tortured financially and psychologically. This is because men who impregnate the girls most of the time do not meet their responsibilities or run away in fear to be arrested,” Mr Kabigi said.

He said due to the vicious cycle of early pregnancies, there is increased

school drop-out in the district.

“When a teen gets pregnant, it automatically means the end of her education career,” he said.

Ms Jacinta Habuya, the nursing assistant at Budaka Health Centre, said the number of early pregnancies in the district is higher than what is recorded in the health facilities.

“Teenage pregnancies are rampant in rural communities only that most of them prefer to abort with the help of traditional birth attendants and health workers in private clinics so we do not get the accurate figures,” Ms Habuya said.

She added that worst of all, when most parents learn that their daughter is pregnant, they plan how to help her abort or arrange marriage.

Mr Sowali Kamulya, the Bukedi regional police spokesperson, said at least two to three cases of defilement are reported daily in the district.

“But the cases are not handled because the complainants disappear when the parties secretly opt for negotiations,” he said, adding that the victims are forcefully married off.

The chairperson of Parliamentary Committee on health, Dr Micheal Bukenya, said Budaka and Kibuku districts in Bugwere sub-region have the highest number of teenage mothers.