

High blood pressure more prevalent among men - study

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KAMPALA. One in every four Ugandan adults has an altered heart function in form of raised blood pressure (BP), a new study has revealed.

The report, which is yet to be officially released by the Ministry of Health, also shows that raised blood pressure is more prevalent among males, at about 26 per cent compared to 23 per cent among women.

Majority of the 3,987 study participants, who had raised BP, were not taking medications for lowering it, according to the findings.

The Uganda National Non-Communicable risks factors survey's major purpose was to determine the prevalence of hypertension, diabetes and abnormal glucose levels.

The survey also looked at risk factors such as tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, overweight and inadequate vegetable and fruit intake.

A multi-stage cluster sampling design was used to produce a national representative of people aged 18-69 years. Of these, 1,602 participants were male and 2,383 female.

"Biochemical measurements were collected to assess total cholesterol and High Density Lipoprotein levels and glucose. Data was weighed for age, gender and population for Uganda and analysed using World Health Organisation STEPS survey software," reads the report in part.

Two districts were selected from each of the regions including Arua, Lira, Gulu, Mbarara, Hoima, Masaka, Kampala and Jinja.

"Of the patients with raised blood glucose, 89 per cent were not on medication nor aware of the raised fasting blood glucose status," the study adds.

Dr John Omangino, the director of Uganda Heart Institute, blames the situation on population living carelessly and engaging in alcohol consumption and tobacco use.

Mr Omangino says increased cholesterol and a raised blood pressure exposes an individual to heart disease and stroke resulting in death.

According to the survey, the prevalence of raised cholesterol among females was higher in urban areas at 16 per cent compared to 7 per cent in rural areas.

THE FINDINGS

Unfit. Only 4.3 per cent of the participants were considered physically inactive.

Obesity. Females had a higher of prevalence of obesity than males at 20 and 10 ratio.

Consumption of fruits. According to the study, 27 per cent of the respondents had not taken fruits.