

Older women rushing to abort - specialist

BY ANTHONY WESAKA
awesaka@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. Several women above 40 years are increasingly accessing abortion services in the country, a senior gynaecologist has revealed.

Dr Charles Kiggundu from Mulago National Referral Hospital said the trend has taken the medical profession by surprise since it is usually the teenage pregnancies that are commonly terminated.

Abortion is the deliberate termination of the human pregnancy, most often performed during the first 28 weeks.

"We are receiving women above the age of 40 seeking to procure abortion services. The trend is increasing and as medics, we are wondering what could be the cause," Dr Kiggundu said on Tuesday during a dialogue on the

role of religion and culture in promoting and regulating sexual reproductive health and rights

When asked what could be the cause, Dr Kiggundu said some women think they have reached menopause stage and when they engage in unprotected sex, they end up getting unwanted

BACKGROUND

Unsafe abortion is among the leading causes of maternal mortality and morbidity in Uganda, contributing to about 26 per cent of the estimated 6,000 maternal deaths every year and about 40 per cent of admissions for emergency obstetric care.

pregnancies. Menopause, which is a natural biological process that happens to every woman, marks the end of a woman's monthly menstrual cycles.

This situation is diagnosed after a woman has gone on for at least a year without experiencing her monthly menstrual periods. Menopause can happen to women between 40 and 50.

Dr Kiggundu said when widows get pregnant, they fear the relatives of their deceased husband may send them away for conceiving with another man.

He added that some women could have stopped giving birth about 10 years ago and when they pregnant, they feel it is not right given the big age gap from the last born.

Dr Kiggundu also said some women engage in extra marital affairs and feel like

not adding another child from a different man, hence resort to abortion. "We are carrying out comprehensive research about this increasing trend and we shall soon come out with a report detailing the real causes of this shift," he said.

The workshop was organised by a civil society organisation, Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development.

THE LAW

Illegal. Abortion in Uganda is illegal though the same can be allowed only to save a life of a pregnant mother.

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