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Hundreds in Busoga receive free surgery

BUSOGA

By Lawrence Mulondo

Rashid Garyebi, 51, is a resident of Muzoona village in Bugiri district. He was diagnosed with hernia in 2005 at Bugiri General Hospital and doctors recommended surgery.

Muzoora underwent surgery in 2010 at the same hospital, after raising sh600,000 for both operation and medication.

Four years later, Garyebi started feeling abdominal pain and was again diagnosed with hernia.

"I have been looking for sh600,000 to have a second surgery, but I had failed," Muzoora said.

Garyebi was one of the hundreds of patients who were screened and underwent free surgery in the five districts of Jinja, Kamuli, Bugiri, Iganga and Mayuge.

The five-day surgical camp was organised by the Rotary



Doctors operating on a goitre patient at Bugiri General Hospital. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

Club of Kampala Day Break, in partnership with Vision Group and the Association of Surgeons Uganda (ASOU).

ASOU president Olivia Kituuka said each year, members of their association and Rotary, spare a week to carry out free surgery in different regions of the country. Kituuka said among the

cases they are registering for operation are goitres, hernias, keloids, fibroids, and BPH (enlarged prostate gland).

"We are referring special cases, such as mature goitres, to Mulago Hospital, since we lack specialised hospital equipment that can only be found in hospitals," she explained.

Kituuka said their main challenge is that they have few anaesthetists. She said her team has five surgeons, but there are only two anaesthetists in each of the Busoga hospitals, which delays operations.

"In operating theatres, each surgeon is supposed to be surgery with an anaesthetist to speed up the work," she said.

An anaesthetist is a person who sedates patients before they undergo surgery.

Dr Samuel Kirunda of Bugiri General Hospital, said 15 of every 20 patients that were screened for operation were found with hernia.

"Most of the hernia cases in adults are the result of straining the body through heavy work. However, some children are born with it," he said.

The Rotary Club of Kampala Day Break president, Timothy Basiima, urged the public to extend health support to the needy, saying the number of people in need of such services is overwhelming.

One of the beneficiaries of the medical camp, Sinina Nakadhama, 46, said she has had goitre for 25 years.

"I could hardly sit, walk or work. I was living in pain. I have been surviving on herbal medicine because it was what I could afford," Nakadhama said.

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