

Oral health remains a challenge for adolescents

BY TOM BRIAN ANGURINI

A study by Mildmay Health Institute Uganda has indicated that, a significant portion of the population has inadequate brushing habits, with studies showing that many individuals only brush once a day, and very few brush after every meal.

The study attributes the increased incidence to high consumption of refined sugars, including sweets, biscuits, carbonated beverages, and sweetened tea, which cause dental caries.

“There is a general lack of understanding regarding proper dental care,” the study shows. “Good oral health services are not fully integrated into all health programmes, leading to limited availability, especially in rural areas.”

The latest report by the Uganda Dental Association, has revealed that 32.5 percent of children and 66.7 percent of adults in Uganda are affected by oral health conditions.

The report shows that, despite these figures, oral health often receives limited priority compared to other pressing health concerns considered more life threatening.

Speaking during this year’s dental

health camp at the Namugongo branch, Dr. Alice Hope Banga, Director of Spes Medical Centre, emphasized the importance of prioritizing oral health.

“Oral health is often overlooked, yet it directly affects nutrition, speech, confidence, and overall well-being. At Spes Medical Centre, we believe that prevention is the foundation of good health-care.

This dental camp allows us to reach the community early, educate them, and prevent avoidable complications before they become serious or costly,” she said.

Dr. Jackline Nakakaawa, a dentist at Spes Medical Centre is encouraging individuals to embrace health insurance coverage, in order to access regular care.

“With insurance, the costs of dental services, from routine check-ups to necessary extractions, are significantly reduced. Individuals can access care at subsidized rates, which improves affordability and encourages regular visits,” Dr. Nakakaawa explained. Limited public awareness also remains a major challenge in oral healthcare.