

16% of Ugandans still not sleeping under mosquito nets – survey

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At least 16 percent of Ugandans do not sleep under Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs), raising concerns among health experts about continued exposure to malaria, according to findings from the 2025 Uganda Malaria Indicator Survey (UMIS).

The survey, conducted between November 29, 2024, and February 3, 2025, assessed malaria prevention practices and treatment patterns across the country, providing updated data on key demographic and health indicators related to malaria.

According to the report, 44,191 people were surveyed across 9,458 households during the study period. The findings also show a shift in population distribution, with the proportion of people living in rural areas dropping from 76 percent in the 2018–19 UMIS to 62 percent in the 2024–25 survey. Researchers attribute this change largely to the creation of new cities and town councils after the previous survey.

The survey collected data on major malaria prevention measures, including mosquito net ownership and usage, intermittent preventive treatment among

pregnant women, and care-seeking behaviour for fever among children. Children were also tested for malaria infection.

Health experts say Insecticide-Treated Nets remain one of the most effective tools in the fight against malaria, as they repel and kill mosquitoes, preventing bites and reducing the spread of malaria parasites.

“When high coverage with ITNs is achieved, they reduce malaria risk not only at the individual level but also across communities by lowering the mosquito population,” the report notes. “The

distribution and use of ITNs remains one of the central interventions for preventing malaria infection in Uganda.”

Despite their proven effectiveness, the survey shows gaps in access and use. Nationwide, 84 percent of households own at least one ITN, while 87 percent own at least one mosquito net of any type.

However, regional differences persist. The largest gap between access to nets and actual use was recorded in Tooro, where 68 percent of people had access to ITNs but only 55 percent used them, representing a 13-percentage-point difference.