

We can stop malaria deaths and illnesses

Malaria is a leading cause of death in Uganda, with children bearing the brunt of a preventable ailment. The government has, over the years, exerted tremendous efforts to reduce malaria-related illnesses and deaths.

These efforts include the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying, vaccination, and elimination of mosquito breeding places.

Great strides have been made in the battle against malaria and its vector, the female *Anopheles* mosquito.

However, more still needs to be done to lessen the malaria burden in the country.

The Uganda Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan 2026-2030, which was launched on April 23, is a big step in the right direction.

A story titled "Mbale child malaria spike reveals health system gaps," which was published in the *Daily Monitor* on Monday, May 4, vividly describes the malaria challenges the country still faces.

In the story, it is stated that malaria accounts for about 45 percent of paediatric admissions at Mbale Regional Referral Hospital.

Mbale authorities blame the high malaria indices on inconsistent use of mosquito nets and failure by residents to destroy mosquito breeding grounds near their homes, among others.

Doctors at Mbale Regional Referral Hospital also mentioned a worrying trend of parents preferring to treat children at home with painkillers and only taking them to the hospital when their conditions have escalated to full-blown fever.

This unfortunate habit risks the lives of children, who could have been easily treated had their parents taken them to hospitals early.

Unfortunately, the problems experienced in Mbale are also faced in other parts of the country, with some people diverting mosquito nets distributed to them free of charge by the government to other uses, such as fishing.

Some misguided people have also opposed and launched campaigns against indoor residual

spraying, alleging that it is harmful to human health.

Others have also falsely claimed that the malaria vaccines that are administered to children endanger their lives.

The false information disseminated by these misguided people greatly impedes efforts to fight malaria.

To counter this misinformation, we call upon the authorities to increase sensitisation efforts. These messages should be presented not only in English but also in local languages so that they can reach the populace.

Those who spread this false information must be penalised because they endanger the health of the entire nation.

Furthermore, local governments should enact laws to compel people to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds near their homes, such as bushes and stagnant water.

People who receive mosquito nets from the government and divert them to unrelated uses must be punished for their misdeeds.

Last but not least, the government must ensure health facilities have medication to treat malaria and the doctors and nurses to administer it and take care of patients.

The issue:

Malaria.

Our view:

The government must ensure health facilities have medication to treat malaria and the doctors and nurses to administer it and take care of patients.

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