



'56% of pregnancies unwanted'

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ABOUT 56% of all pregnancies in Uganda are unplanned due to lack of access to modern family planning methods.

This was contained in a report titled, *Meeting the Contraceptive Needs of Ugandan Women*, by the Guttmacher Institute and Makerere's Economic Policy Research Institute.

It was released during a function at the Population Secretariat in Kampala on Saturday.

The report explained that most Ugandan women did not want to have children, but lacked the means to stop pregnancies.

The limited use of contraceptives in Uganda has led to many unplanned pregnancies, according to the report.

The report is based on a 2008 study, which reached 49% of women in the reproductive age. The respondents were either married or unmarried and sexually active.

They were also able to become pregnant or wanted to delay having children for at least two years while others did not want any more children at all.

Of the estimated 2.2 million pregnancies in Uganda last year, approximately 1.2 million births were unintended.

The biggest proportion was found in the West Nile region, and smallest in the southwest region.

The report also said 81,000 women die annually from pregnancy and delivery-related issues.

Of these deaths, about 3,800 were associated with unintended pregnancies.

The report mentions the modern family planning contraceptive methods including the pill, intrauterine device, injectable implant, male condom and sterilisation.

However, there was low use of the contraceptives because of high costs, fear of sideeffects and the belief that they imply infidelity.

"Preventing unintended pregnancy has the potential to lower maternal mortality," the report said.

It also recommended contraceptive use as important in limiting women's exposure to risks involved with unintended pregnancy.

It said the Government would save billions by investing in family planning services.

The report also pointed out that increased use of modern contraceptives would help attain the Millenium Development Goals of promoting women equality and reducing child and maternal mortality.

This article can be found on-line at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/701373>

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