

According to the Uganda Demographics profile following the Population census (2014), Uganda is estimated to have 35,918,915 people. Of which those considered to be elderly people (65 years old and above) account for 2.1% of the total population and according to the Ministry of Health, 20% of the elderly people in Uganda are suffering from malnutrition (MoH, 2004). Yet in some district such as Mpigi, the prevalence of malnutrition was found to be higher at 33% of all elderly people (Kikafunda, 2004). Therefore, the factors influencing the occurrence of malnutrition among the elderly people need to be investigated so as to generate feasible mitigation as it impacts on morbidity and mortality rates among this age group.

The problem of malnutrition exists in both forms of under nourishment and excessive intake of nutrients resulting into nutritional related illness such as body wasting and obesity among elderly people. According to Nabiruma (2011), although Kabale district used to be a national food basket the level of malnutrition among elderly people is high at an estimated 33.1% . If the nutritional status of the elderly people in Kabale is not improved, there may be consequences such as; Nutritional related morbidities and mortalities, decreased productivity among the elderly, increased prevalence of malnutrition in the region and increased government expenditure to mitigate the problem of malnutrition in kabala.

This research study was a descriptive cross-sectional study involving the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. This was because it was aimed at obtaining data on a representative sample from the study population at a specific time and from key individuals within the community.

Cluster sampling was used in full consideration of the hilly terrain in Mparo- Kigezi and widely spaced homesteads. The County was divided into clusters with villages as the primary sampling units corresponding to the administrative areas within the County from easy to hard to reach. A probability proportional to size (PPS) method was applied to estimate the number of respondents to interview from each zone in order to obtain a non-biased number of the elderly based on the estimated population of each area and the recommended clusters. The households with the elderly from each village cluster was selected using the snow ball sampling method whereby information identifying the households with elderly people was gathered from one member of the community or elderly person leading the researcher to another elderly person.

The study involved more women than men; majority 177 (52.1%) were women compared to men who were 163 (47.9%). Majority of the respondents, 219 (64.4%) were within the age group of 65-70 years and only 11 (3.3%) were 81 and above years. The highest proportion of the respondents, 163 (47.9%) had primary level education while only 19 (5.6%) had tertiary level education. The highest proportion of respondents, 108 (31.8%) were Protestants followed by 27.9% were Catholics while only 36 (10.6%)

were Muslims. The highest proportion of the respondents, 176 (52.8%) were married while only 38 (10.1%) were widowed.

The government should start up elderly communities where the elderly people can go and be taken care of especially to be supported with provision of food which can enable them get proper nutrition.

Elderly people should be encouraged to live with other people such as their relatives and avoid staying alone which could limit their access to food as well as contribute to malnutrition.

Both elderly men and women should have a balanced diet and appropriately so as to avoid extreme cases of malnutrition such as under-nutrition and obesity.