

Malaria: an epidemic in Ruyigi. Meanwhile, nets are for fish and termites.

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The distribution of impregnated mosquito nets throughout the province of Ruyigi did not prevent malaria from spreading widely. The population is either ignorant of the nets' proper use or simply unaware of their existence.

Since 2008, the number of malaria victims has increased significantly. According to Dr. Athanase Nderagakura, director of Ruyigi's health district, certain civilians do not know how to use the impregnated mosquito nets. "Some even spread them onto the bed for protection against cockroaches," he says.

Nets for fish and termites

"I cannot sleep under a mosquito net. I use it to fish in the river Sanzu," explains Masigo, a Mutwa from the hill Kigamba. For him, the nets are very effective for fishing: "I can go home with four fish per day. I prefer to suffer from malaria than go to bed with an empty stomach." In Buyogoma and Kumoso, most people use these nets to cover termite mounds in order to catch termites, considered valuable food in these regions. Dr. Athanase Nderagakura recommends that the health care professionals (Techniciens de la promotion de la santé - TPS) raise the awareness concerning the use of these nets.

According to statistics from Ruyigi's Provincial Health Office, in 2008 the number of deaths caused by malaria was 98,576. The following year, it killed 125,122 people, and in the first quarter of 2010, the victims numbered 33,311. According to the same sources, statistics show that this number could reach 135,000 during this year.