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Medical Practitioners should not mislead pregnant women to opt for the knife.

Medical practitioners should not mislead pregnant women to go for caesarean deliveries for their (doctors) personal gain.

Some sections of the media recently reported that the number of Caesarean deliveries is escalating at an alarming rate in this country owing to doctors misleading pregnant women into opting for the knife. According to their investigations, doctors are encouraging pregnant mothers to opt for caesarean surgery for profiteering purposes of which hospitals, especially privately owned, are said to be reaping handsome returns from the growing trend.

The number of caesarean deliveries are said to have risen four times to a shocking 70 percent in a month according to data from health insurance providers, which was shared with the media. The reports also state that the payment for a caesarean surgery in middle class private owned hospitals is between Tshs 1.5 million and Tshs 2.5 million, while normal deliveries cost between Tshs 500,000 and Tshs 700,000.

Sikika discovered that though the media quoted recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO) that only 15 percent of all births should be done through the knife, the WHO recently dropped these recommendations arguing that there was no evidence for placing a limit. The WHO now states that “there is no empirical evidence for an optimum percentage” and stresses that “what matters most is that all women who need caesarean section receive them”.

Sikika believes that all women who voluntarily opt for surgery should get it but medical professionals should not mislead these women into it. In fact, pregnant women have the right to information especially about their health so that they can make informed decisions.

Sikika, therefore, urges all medical personnel, especially doctors, to uphold ethics of their profession and provide the right information to pregnant women, who in turn should make informed choices. They should value human life more than personal gains and should avail information that protects the lives of both the child and the mother.

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