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**I: This is an IDI with a spiritual healer in Lunga Lunga, Viwandani field office. Welcome, we are going to have a discussion on epilepsy. Before we get to that, you may tell us**

**examples of diseases you pray for people on, or what services do people come to you to get from you?**

R: The services that I offer when people come to my home and tell me that they have a particular problem such as malaria, epilepsy and other diseases that individuals get. Mostly when people come to my home we start with prayers because God is everything, also I seek to know if they have visited a health facility to know that the disease they are talking about is what they have and what treatment they have got. So mostly I insist on respecting the doctor as the bible says, therefore I am not a doctor but an intercessor that you go for treatment and then come we pray that through the medications given God will heal you because no one can heal the other but healing comes from God.

**I: What advice do you give to those who have said that they have not yet gone to the hospital?**

R: We usually have a lot of challenges when people come to our houses because some might say that they are from a witch doctor who told them that they have been bewitched and that a particular disease has been sent to them. That even if they go to the hospital they can't get cured but such individuals you have to understand it is that they have less faith and therefore you uplift their faith. You have to show them that even the one who has bewitched you is a normal human and not a God and there is a God who heals and God has to use something to heal you since God cannot just come to heal you even in the times of Eden God would come to the trees and talk to Adam and not stand in front of Adam. So you must take medications and through the medications, God will use them to bring healing. Therefore, in all cases, before we pray to them we ask them to visit a health facility, and after prayers I let them know that they should not put their trust in the prayers but go take medications.

**I: Do you pray for epileptic patients?**

R: Yes, so many of them.

**I: And to those you have prayed for have some been cured?**

R: Yes; but all those who have been cured are visiting a health facility, I usually ask them to take medications as we pray.

**I: What names are used in Viwandani to refer to epilepsy?**

R: Most of the time they will just say that a particular person usually falls down, that they are epileptic because they fall for no reason.

**I: Any other names used?**

R: No.

**I: Why do they use the phrase that a particular person usually falls?**

R: Most of them when they are explaining they will say that the individual has epilepsy because it was there in their family, some will say they have been bewitched and some will talk of the devils.

**I: What causes epilepsy according to you?**

R: Mostly epilepsy even in the bible are diseases that came to the Israelites when they had done evil things and God would release these diseases to them. Epilepsy is one of such diseases and therefore if you meet someone with epilepsy and they have gone to the hospital, we usually read the bible for them and it is easy for us to pray for them. We see that in the early days when the Israelites did a lot of evil things God would bring diseases to them but when they repented the diseases went away, even for epilepsy when they repent they are healed because these are generational diseases that have been following them. We usually pray for them and cut them a bit but not by knife but with anointing oil, anointing water and then you pray for them. We usually believe that God will listen to them and if it is sin, it will go to the first to fourth generation and then it will be done.

**I: So in your opinion epilepsy is from sin?**

R: No it is not, if it is sin everyone has sin and even now we have sinned that we cannot know because even looking at you I have sinned because you do not know the mistakes I have seen in you and what you have seen in me and that is a sin. This is a disease just like you

usually get malaria and that is why I said you should go to the hospital first when you are sick. If you are tested and told that you are epileptic, you should start treatment. Most of the time the problem we have in our village is that you get tested and you have prescribed medications that you are not capable of buying, yet you do not have family or friends to help and that is why they have less faith that a disease was bewitched towards them yet it is just the fact that they were unable to follow up medication and did not have a person to support them. Therefore, epilepsy is a disease and not a sin and everyone has a sin if you get sick my sister go to the hospital if you do not you will die.

**I: I asked that because you had indicated that in the bible there are those diseases caused by curses and that it will attack the first to the fourth generation.**

R: I said that meaning that if you have anything on you as we pray that will go away. I cannot say that this is a sin or a curse but a disease that one should go to the hospital and if you do not go to the hospital you are just making yourself suffer.

**I: What else do you think causes epilepsy apart from the one you have said is hereditary?**

R: From my perspective, I have never understood well what causes these illnesses because it is confusing how a normal person just falls down, and it is hard to know if it is the blood or what is happening. That is why we ask people to go seek medical advice.

**I: According to you, do you think there are different types of epilepsy?**

R: The way I understand epilepsy is from people who come to my house because they mostly fall down and start to pull their feet, removing foam. They behave as if they are dying and you cannot understand them easily. To my understanding, I have not understood epilepsy.

**I: How has your experience been praying for epileptic patients?**

R: When I usually pray for them the first time they have to assure me that they will visit a health facility, when we pray and they take their medications most of the time they get healed.

**I: Apart from anointing oil and water, what else do you use to pray for the patients?**

R: There is nothing else that I use. All I know is that I am a catholic and I know that anointing water is the blood of Jesus as long as it has received prayers from the Father. So if you use that water, if one had demons they will leave him.

**I: Do you think it is important for epileptic people to come for prayers?**

R: It is not important at all what is important is that you visit a health facility and get medications we must not put our hopes on a fellow human you just look for someone who can help you get to the hospital and when you get the medication now you go and pray since you have done your part, and then God will heal you.

**I: Has your services had demand by epileptic people?**

R: I cannot say there are many because I do not only pray for epileptic patients but people who come to my home presenting different problems.

**I: How many so far have you prayed for that are epileptic?**

R: I started serving a long time ago in 2015 and therefore I cannot know how many they are.

**I: Are there those who have been happy and satisfied with your services?**

R: A lot of them get healed and come back and thank me that they are okay after I directed them to the hospital and prayed with them.

**I: So there are those who had epilepsy and you prayed for healing to them?**

R: Yes, but they had medications, there is one who is a Luo who got healed, a very strong one yet he believed that it is his brother who had bewitched him. But I did my best because I observed that he used to stay for a long time before regaining consciousness and realized it might be a problem once and he will not come back. I convinced him and took him personally to Health Facility M and he was able to get medications and got healed. The family had even rejected him but right now he stays with his family and has a job now yet he used just to walk around like a mad person.

**I: How do you know that when you have prayed for someone that they are improving?**

R: Most of the time what is important is the counselling because when someone has refused to take medications believing that they have been bewitched and as I told you it is faith that heals someone and makes one die because they believe that they have been bewitched. You will die because it is not that someone has bewitched you but you have refused to go to hospital believing you are bewitched going for prayers all the time yet you are supposed to be taking medications so most of the time we just need to talk to them like that young man who I had to personally take him to the hospital so that he can get medications, so that as we pray he continues with medications.

**I: That boy had epilepsy?**

R: Yes.

**I: You said there is one that you prayed for and got healed.**

R: It is the same boy I am talking about, he took medication and got well and now he is back to the family and working.

**I: Are there those that you pray for but know that they will not get well?**

R: Yes, so many of them I pray for them but they do not get well yet they are on medication but still continue to fall. So it gets to a point that they lose hope and stop coming for prayers because they feel they are not getting help.

**I: What happens to the spirit of a person who has died from epilepsy**

R: Nothing happens when one dies, they just get buried.

**I: How do you know when you have prayed for someone but you realize that they are not getting better? Is there a time you can pray for someone and you realize it's not working on that person?**

R: Yes, many times. You can pray for someone several times and if they are not getting better you will even tell them to seek services elsewhere and see if they can get help since you

have prayed for them and they are taking medications and you cannot keep them in the house.

**I: Have you ever had an epileptic patient whose prayers did not help despite them taking your advice to have medications?**

R: Most of the people that we pray for are not from your area because an intercessor does not have respect in their community, most people come from far and therefore when you pray for them and they are gone you might not know if they got help if they do not come back yet you cannot be following up to know how they are doing or if they got healed. If they don't get well, they will just refuse to come back again.

**I: Are there times you feel prayers will not help a particular person?**

R: I cannot say that the prayers are not helping since it is not me but God who is helping them. My hope is that when someone has medications and we are able to pray they will be well because God is never late and you cannot hurry him so it is their time to heal that has not reached and when time comes they will be healed.

**I: How do you know that people value your services?**

R: I get to know that people value my services by the way they come to me from far upcountry and say that they have been referred to me by someone.

**I: Do you have something to add on epilepsy?**

R: What I can add is that I come from Viwandani and in Viwandani we have a lot of poor and rich people and these diseases mostly come from how people eat yet most of them are poor and therefore unable to afford a proper meal. Most of the time when people do not have access to the medication they usually hurt and if your organization can be able to come in they will be able to help a lot of people since most people die due to lack of treatment and someone to help. We do not do this because we are capable but it is because we have it in our heart that we should help each other. Any way that you can

help, it will be great especially on medications. People go to the witch doctor because they are not able to access medications.

**I: So you are saying that it is not easy to get medication for epileptic patients in Viwandani.**

R: Yes, drugs are not available for example, I know of a child who goes to school and her mother is a house help who gets 6 thousand a month. I usually see her suffer since sometimes she gets a call from school to come for the child and maybe her employers are not available, and since she does not have money she will not know where to take the child apart from home, this is where services for intercessors come in handy because they know they do not pay us and therefore will come to see how we can help.

**I: For those that you advise to go to hospital, where do they mostly go to?**

R: Most of them will go to Health Facility D. Because most of those who go to Health Facility L are sent to Health Facility D.

**I: Are they able to get medications when they go to Health Facility D?**

R: Some of them say that there is a different facility that they get referred to where they are able to get medications. Most of those that go there get healed from those medications. You know this disease, I do not know if it is that they get healed or what happens but they stop falling down the way they used to and it will take time.

**I: Thank you very much, we appreciate your time and opinions.**

[End of audio]