

JUNE 13
INTERNATIONAL
ALBINISM
AWARENESS DAY
Shining our light to the world



INTERNATIONAL WORLD ALBINISM DAY

This day is commemorated on the 13th of June every year globally. It has been proclaimed by the UN to spread information on albinism and to avoid discrimination and even murder of albinos.

"Albinism" is a rare non-contagious genetic condition whereby the body is unable to produce melanin which is responsible for skin pigmentation, it occurs regardless of ethnicity or gender. Both parents must carry the gene for it to be passed on where there is a 25% chance that the child will be born with the disorder, even if neither of them has albinism themselves. The disorder does not have any known cure. The general characteristics are; light coloured hair and skin, visual problems, pale eyes. They are also very prone to getting skin cancer.

Albinism in Africa occurs at a rate of 1 in 5000 people. In Kenya there is an association called "Albinism society of Kenya", which aims at championing for the rights and needs of persons with albinism in Kenya.

Self-care practices for individuals with albinism include;

- Use of eye glasses to correct errors and excessive exposure to sunlight.
- Use of sunscreens when moving out doors.
- Wearing protective clothing's such as long sleeved shirts, collared shirts, long pants and socks, hats.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun.
- Always have an annual skin check-up.

Challenges facing albinos include;

- Due to visual problems they do not perform well in school.
- Imminent danger of being killed for their body parts due to fake superstitious beliefs and witchcraft.
- Stigmatization.
- Low self-esteem.
- Economic difficulties.

The following points can be done to improve the lives of people living with albinism;

- Demystifying albinism through education to the public.
- Evaluate and address the needs of people living with albinism.
- Protection measures on the lives.
- Empower people with albinism to prevent discrimination and stigma.
- Providing supportive health care to persons with albinism.



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