By Our Reporter;

About two million Rwandans are suffering from mental illness, the National Institute of Health said on Tuesday quoting a study.

This figure also accounts for 20.5% percent of the population, an extrapolation based on the number of 13 million Rwandans, where one in five people have the disease knowingly or unknowingly.

Mental illness is prevalent but the prevalence in Rwanda is 11.9% of specific grief, 8.6% of special anxiety, 3.6% of traumatic stress disorder, 3.6% of specific depression and ‘specific epilepsy 2.9%.

The survey carried out on more than 19,000 people in all parts of the country found that mental illness was more prevalent in women than in men, where 53.3% of patients were women while 48.8% were men.

Most of the patients are found in the Southern Province followed by the City of Kigali, while Gasabo Districts is reported to be at the forefront of having the highest number of people with mental illnesses.

RBC Head of Mental Health, Dr. Yvonne Kayiteshonga, said that the problem is especially acute when it comes to the survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi where the number has risen four times.

These figures show that one in two or 52% of the survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi are suffering from one or another mental illness.

Another worrying and specific strategy, Kayiteshonga underlined, is that one in 10 children between the ages of 14 and 18 have a mental illness.

“Also, because of the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi, there are many other Rwandans who do not realize the so-called mental illness, but have a life of disruption; They persevere, get up, go to work, go to school, work, but their lives will not be the same as they were before the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.”

As Rwanda prepares to join the World in Celebrating the International Day of Mental Health, on Sunday, October 10, 2021, Dr. Kayiteshonga was able to remind Rwandans that mental health is the cornerstone of human life and therefore cooperation is needed to preserve it.

“There is no good mental health in the country without the cooperation of the institutions and the people,” he said.

“After observing that Rwandans have mental health problems, a large number of people, even though they know that there are services, do not imitate them,” She said.

She added, “When you construct a building that houses doctors who treat patients and provide them with medicine and have all the necessary equipment, but people don’t go to acquire that service which is a problem. When it comes to mental health services, people are afraid of being discriminated against by someone with a mental illness. There are so many types it’s hard to say”

According to Dr. Jean Damascène, head of the department of psychiatry at RBC, mental illnesses will no longer be heard only abroad, as they are also present in Rwanda at a very high rate, according to the results of the study.

“These diseases are prevalent in Rwanda and everywhere, in all districts, but Gasabo District in Kigali City is the first to be followed by Huye District, Gisagara and Nyamagabe districts in the Province of Kigali,” he said.

Mental illness affects everyone especially the most vulnerable categories, particularly those who are at risk of supernatural violence such as the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Dr. The creator also stressed that the COVID-19 epidemic had an impact on the mental health of Rwandans and the people around the globe in general, as it has led to dramatic social and economic changes in daily life.

Around 12% of people in sub-Saharan Africans live with a mental illness such as depression, anxiety, bipolar, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and alcohol and drug use disorders — a figure that’s likely to be higher following COVID-19.