

ALBINISM AND RITUAL MURDERS

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Albinism (Albus Latin meaning white) is a genetic condition that results in partial or total deficiency of melanin in hair, eyes and skin. Albinism occurs in all races with reported prevalence rates ranging from 1:4000 in Zimbabwe, 1: to 1: 20000 in the USA. It People living with albinism have to deal with multiple medical conditions such as blindness, sunburns, skin malignancies etc. These conditions are worse for Albinos in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has the highest number of albinism per population. This is addition to mental, social and economic burden they suffer from active and passive discrimination. A new physical and life threatening complication has arisen that seem to be ignored by then medical and political fraternity. People with albinism have been murdered and physically assaulted for the purposes of obtaining body parts based on a belief that they possess magical powers that can provide good fortune. Albinos are being targeted for their limbs, hearts, liver, genitals amongst other body parts. Ritualistic murders of albinos have become a public health issue for countries like Malawi, Tanzania and Mozambique. People are living with fear to go to school, work and in public places for fear of being targeted. In an effort to fight this, it is necessary to strengthen the knowledge of this condition and debunk the myths surrounding albinism.