It is Mulago Hospital which was careless and not the patients

EDITOR: I am a medical doctor. I read with great sadness the stories that came out so clearly well in New Vision about patients that have mysteriously died in Mulago Hospital. Initially someone (only identified as a patient because he had a blood cannula) was reported on and just two days later, we read another story that "another patient dies in Mulago Hospital septic tank." What I fail to understand is the way the hospital public relations officer, Dan Kimosho, brushes off the matter as a non-issue. It was an unfortunate statement from the officer that this "was being careless!" That poor patient with a seizure disorder drowned in an apparently open sewer! To remind Kimosho, when someone has an epileptic fit, they do not need to be careful not to fall in an open sewer because the patient is unconscious. That is precisely why they need to be helped. I think it is the responsibility of the hospital to ensure patient safety as a first priority and not blaming them for being 'careless'. The hospital should ensure that there are "no open sewers" because they are dangerous to all patients as well as non-patients.

Secondly, there was no need to relate these patients' accidental deaths to impersonators that come to the hospital. This was a cunning way of brushing off a very critical matter for which the hospital should have reacted responsibly. I think Mulago owes the nation and the families of the departed an apology and this can best be done by ensuring there are no open sewers in the hospital.

Name withheld

EDITOR: For lack of a better adjective, the public relations officer of Mulago Hospital, Dan Kimosho, is a disgrace! How can he blame patients for being careless because they fell into a septic tank that the hospital left open? Is it the patient responsibility to ensure such basic safety in the hospital? Why should a septic tank be left gaping? Kimosho should be reminded that even the director of Mulago Hospital can fall into that septic tank. Shame on Mulago!

Angelline Kabaingi
Kyenjojo

Uganda must move fast on HIV

EDITOR: HIV-positive Rwandans in discordant relationships will start taking antiretroviral treatment (ART) as soon as they test positive as part of a plan to boost national HIV prevention and treatment efforts. In May, a landmark study showed major reductions in HIV transmission among discordant couples due to early treatment. According to the Uganda government, putting into policy the results from recent research on HIV prevention will take several years. This, according to the Government, is because it has to do wide consultations. It is also argued that it is neither affordable nor sustainable for the country to put so many people on ARVs! This information is contained in a press release by the Uganda Aids Commission and the Ministry of Health and was published on August 25 in the local press. The more the country delays taking on new proven HIV interventions and scale up HIV prevention the more resources we will have to spend on treatment in future! As a country we need to move faster and also learn from our neighbours next door and speed up the process from research results to policy. From policy we should immediately move to implementation and not repeat what is happening with male circumcision where Kenya and Rwanda are moving very fast on the matter.

Uganda is still at action planning for circumcision even after four years since the research results were released. This explains why HIV infection is at such an alarming rate of 350 people getting infected daily in Uganda!

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There was no justification for the arrest of the Makerere University guild leaders

EDITOR: The arrest of the Makerere University guild cabinet on September 9 was utterly uncalled for and legally unjustifiable. The Police officers justified the arrest by claiming that the students had held an unlawful assembly and were inciting violence. Uganda is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees freedom of assembly and peaceful assembly and it is an essential human right to claim that human rights are non-negotiable. Uganda is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees the freedom of association and the right to form and join trade unions or other associations for the protection of interests, which is a right of every individual. The rights and freedoms set forth in this international covenant are neither new nor unique. They have been enshrined in the declarations and conventions which have been adopted by the different regional and international human rights bodies.

The arrest was illegal and arbitrary. Why did the police officers confiscate the students’ gowns? They were a celebration of the new harvests. The students were not engaging in any illegal activity and were simply expressing their rights and freedoms as citizens. The police officers acted arbitrarily and without justification when they arrested the students.

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