

# Cholera cases on the rise in Kagadi

KAGADI

By Ismael Kasooha

The number of people hit by cholera on the shores of Lake Albert in Kagadi district has risen to 47, with children below the age of 15 most affected.

By Monday evening, eight people had been admitted to the isolation unit at Kitebere landing site on the shores of Lake Albert, five of them children.

Dr Francis Kanyike of Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) Makerere University who has been sent to handle the situation told *New Vision* that the patients in the isolation unit were improving steadily and responding to treatment.

He, however, said there was need to improve infection control, especially on the dustbins where used gloves and other supplies are deposited before disposal because this can cause further infection.

"We need more standard dustbins which we can step on instead of touching them because there is a risk of re-infection," Kanyike said.



A latrine less than 10 metres from Lake Albert

He said carers in the isolation unit should be urgently sensitised on the best way to look after patients so that they are not infected

## Managing the outbreak

IDI has sent health workers with supplies and drugs to help in the management of the outbreak as laboratory tests are being carried out at the central public health laboratory to ascertain the real cause of the outbreak.

Of the rapid diagnostic tests

(RDT) made on 21 samples, 11 have tested positive for cholera.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) also intervened with logistics such as medical supplies and motor vehicles.

Oscar Chunyai, the LC3 chairperson of Ndaiga sub-county, told *New Vision* that the situation was still bad because people were reporting to the isolation unit with signs of cholera.

Chunyai said since the beginning of April, more than



Health workers attending to patients in the cholera isolation unit at Kitebere landing site on Lake Albert in Kagadi district. Photo by Ismael Kasooha

30 people had contracted the disease, which is worrying the residents.

He said samples which were taken to Kampala tested negative, but going by past history and sequence, this is cholera. He said all those reporting to the isolation unit are passing out watery stool and vomiting. When they are introduced to cholera treatment they improve.

## Outbreaks

Chunyai said cholera resurfaces in the area after every three years and the last time it broke out was in April 2015.

Stephen Byaruhanga Mfashingabo, the Kagadi LCV chairperson said had

## BETWEEN THE LINES:

Chunyai said since the beginning of April, more than 30 people have contracted the disease, which is worrying the local people.

it not been the immediate intervention of WHO, many people would have died.

He said the outbreak came at a time when the district had no money, but with the intervention of other partners, the situation had improved.

Mfashingabo commended health workers and the village health team members who have worked for all this period

without pay.

He said the district had submitted a budget to the health ministry, but no response had been made for close to two weeks.

"We have serious financial challenges in managing this outbreak, but I have to commend the health workers and village health teams for their relentless efforts to save the lives of our people," Mfashingabo said.

John Alibankoha, the secretary for health and education in Kagadi district, said people's negligence was part of the problem.

"How can a person dig a latrine at the shore of the lake less than 10 metres from the waters?" Alibankoha asked.