



**Overwhelmed.** Patients queue up at the Out-Patient department at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital in Fort Portal town, Kabarole District, recently. Health workers at the hospital say many of the patients are self-referred.

PHOTO BY ALEX ASHABA

225,322 in 2015/2016 to 244,249 in 2016/2017. The number of referrals at the facility was 6,866 cases in 2016 where more than 160 patients were further referred to other facilities.

The report also indicated that patients, who were on admission also increased from 28,264 in 2015/16 to 29,818 in 2016/17.

During the Rwenzori sub-region joint health sector performance review of the financial year 2016/17, in Fort Portal town recently, Dr Florence Tugumisirize, the director of Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, said 90 per cent of patients at the facility are self-referred.

She said many referrals come from Rwamwaja Health Centre III (Kamwenge), Kyenjojo Hospital, Kyarusozo health centre IV, Kagadi Hospital, Virika hospital.

Dr Tugumisirize said late referrals from other health facilities has also increased the number of mortality rate at the facility. She says in 2016/17 about 1,243 patients died at the facility.

"The mortality rate at the facility is high due to late referrals from other health facilities and patients die within 24 hours of admission," Dr Tugumisirize said.

The facility report showed that maternal death at the facility also has increased from 48 to 50 in 2016/17.

#### Blood transfusion

Most of the referrals at the facility are of blood transfusion, which has become a problem in the entire Rwenzori sub-region.

Recently, eight people died at Fort Portal referral hospital because of blood shortage at Fort Portal regional blood bank.

According to the principal manager at Fort Portal regional blood bank, Dr James Ngobi, the regional blood bank has been facing blood shortage since the start of the year.

According to records at Fort Portal regional blood bank, in 2016/17, the unit has been collecting 2,250 units of blood per month that serves the seven major hospitals in the region.

Ms Annette Birungi, a patient, who was found sited in the OPD waiting for a doctor, said she referred herself at the facility because in other health facilities they don't get better treatment.

"I do not have a referral letter because I feel comfortable when I get treatment from here by these doctors they talk to us in a friendly way and I know that at the end of the day I will be treated and get healed," Ms Birungi said.

# Fort Portal grapples with more patients

**Concern.** Dr Florence Tugumisirize, the director of Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, says 90 per cent of patients at the facility are self-referred.

BY ALEX ASHABA  
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

**KABAROLE.** Health workers at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital have expressed concern over the increasing number of patients, majority of which are self-referrals.

The number of patients who refer themselves to the facility keeps on increasing every day, according to Dr George Asaba, a paediatrician at the outpatient department

He said many of the patients come without referral letters from their respective health centres.

Dr Asaba said out of 10 patients, who visit the facility every day, only two are found with referral letters from other health facilities and the rest are self-referred who make the health facility more congested.

"The majority of the patients we receive here every day have minor cases such as cough which can be treated by the lower health centres," he said recently.

#### Increased patients

The hospital's report on service delivery performance for 2016/17 shows that patients at the out-patients department have increased from