

Govt moves to manage depression in HIV cases

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KAMPALA. Government through the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) has launched a study to develop a model for integrating depression management into HIV care for adults at health facilities.

Depression is common among people living with HIV, with MRC and UVRI indicating that eight to 30 per cent of persons living with HIV in Africa have a depressive disorder.

Prof Eugene Kinyanda, who is the recipient of the Senior Wellcome Trust fellowship, said depression is not only confined to people living with HIV, but also common in other medical conditions and among the general population.

He was speaking at the launch of the five-year study at Mpigi District headquarters on Thursday.

“This research will develop a model for integrating depression assessment and management in adult HIV care in public healthcare facilities and evaluate this model

KEY ISSUES

Symptoms. Depressive disorders are marked by symptoms of persistent sadness, loss of interest in pleasurable activities, including loss of interest in sex, loss of appetite, and poor sleep.

Training. Prof Kinyanda said health workers will be trained to be able to detect and treat patients with depression.

Collaboration. The study to be undertaken in the districts of Mpigi, Wakiso, Masaka and Kalungu, is in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Makerere University Department of Psychiatry, Kyambogo University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

sion and cost effectiveness in a randomised trial,” Prof Kinyanda said.

Mr Geoffrey Taasi, a programme

services at the Ministry of Health, said the study will help establish the magnitude of the mental health disorder.

He said depression contributes to risky behaviour, which also ends up in new HIV infections.

Prof Kinyanda said those who suffer depression often end up failing to adhere to treatment thus affecting their quality of life.

Currently, many HIV care providers in the country do not conduct the required assessment and management of the condition despite the 2016 Health ministry guidelines recommending routine assessment and management of depression.

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Mr Peter Clever Mutuluuza, the Mpigi District chairperson, asked residents to test regularly to know their status and also guard against