

further delay.

public health facilities to a standstill over the past three weeks.

quality care. They form the largest portion of the health workforce.

treatment at the health facility.

"The nurses have been around, attending to patients. I am not aware

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South African medics scrutinise minister Moriku case

By Mary Karugaba

Ugandan and South African medics have joined the fight to find the cause of the sickness, which the state minister for primary health care, Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu has been battling for several weeks.

Reports from the health ministry indicates that a top Mulago National Referral Hospital pathologist, Dr Sylvester Onzivua, was on Monday dispatched to South Africa with her samples to carry out the toxicology tests.

A toxicology test, also called a 'tox screen', checks for drugs or other chemicals in one's blood, urine, or saliva.

Drugs can be swallowed,

inhaled, injected or absorbed through the skin or a mucous membrane.

Moriku, who is also the Woman MP for Moyo, was first admitted to Mulago last month over suspected food poisoning. She was later discharged.

However, a few days later, she developed complications and was rushed to Platinum Hospital, a private hospital in Nakasero, Kampala.

According to the Minister of State for Health in charge of General Duties, Sarah Opendi, Moriku was then referred to the Intensive Care Unit at International Hospital Kampala (IHK) after her condition deteriorated as a result of an "unknown complication".



Minister Moriku

"Right now, we do not know the cause of her current condition. That is why samples were sent to South Africa for further examination. We

Moriku had earlier been treated for food poisoning at Mulago

can only tell the cause of the problem after the tests," Opendi told *New Vision* on phone yesterday.

According to Opendi, Moriku was supposed to be taken to either Aga Khan University Hospital or two other hospitals in South Africa, but doctors had not received clearance from the three hospitals because all their intensive care beds were occupied.

"We have received information from Aga Khan University that one of the patients has been

discharged. We are making preparations to fly her there," Opendi said.

Asked whether the minister was still battling the effects of food poisoning, Opendi said that case had been managed at Mulago and the minister was later discharged.

"We cannot say it is food poisoning because the condition was managed. It is later that she developed other complications. It was suspected that she had pneumonia. When the situation deteriorated, she

was put on oxygen and referred to IHK, where she is currently admitted," Opendi said.

Sources, however, said Moriku was re-admitted because she "did not recover completely from the previous problem".

Opendi dismissed media reports that the minister had slipped into coma.

"She was induced into coma because she was getting irritated by the tubes. Therefore, for them to work without being pulled out of her body, she had to be induced into coma."

A source said in medically induced coma situations, a patient receives a controlled dose of an anaesthetic, to cause a temporary coma or a deep state of unconsciousness.