

Mulago suspends operations over blood shortage

BY LILIAN NAMAGEMBE
lnamagembe@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. The current blood shortage in the country has forced hospitals, including Mulago Hospital to suspend major operations, putting the life of patients at risk.

Government last week raised the red flag over the shortage of blood in the country, calling upon people to donate in order to save lives.

At the country's national referral hospital, Dr Enock Kusasira, the hospital spokesperson, said some surgeries have had to be rescheduled to save blood for emergency cases such as delivery and accidents.

"We have a reasonable shortage of blood, especially for O Negative and Positive blood groups," Mr Kusasira on Thursday.

Mr Kusasira was, however, hesitant to comment on whether the hospital had registered any deaths resulting from the blood shortage.

Operation suspended

Last week alone, the Uganda Heart Institute (UHI), one of the sections at Mulago hospital which have been most affected by the shortage, had to suspend two major open heart surgeries.

Dr John Omangino, the institute's executive director, said it was almost impossible to mobilise six units of blood to carry out one of the peculiar cases which required O Negative blood group.

"Any patient we operate at the heart institute requires at least six units of blood," Dr Omangino said.

In order to avoid future incidents which may occur due to the continuous blood shortage, Dr Sarah Ndibalekera, the administrator of Kawempe Hospital, which largely handles women deliveries, revealed that they have started mobilising the nearby communities and care takers to donate blood.

However, some private hospitals like International Hospital Kampala (IHK) said the blood shortage has not yet affected them and instead they are receiving blood transfusion cases from other facilities.