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Doctors want mental tests for presidential candidates

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PARLIAMENT. The Uganda Medical Association (UMA) has proposed that presidential candidates undergo mental health and physical fitness tests so that the electorate can judge their ability to control their emotions, reason and recall facts.

"All candidates intending to lead Uganda as president should undergo a full battery of medical examinations and

tests, as appropriate, including, but not limited to mental health and physical health," said UMA president Ekwaro Obuku yesterday at Parliament.

UMA's recommendation comes following a request by the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to establish if a person at the age of 75 is fit to lead Uganda.

However, UMA said the issue of whether a 75-year-old can lead Uganda is a political one and thus, should be subjected to universal adult suffrage.

"[The] representatives of Ugandans, that is Parliament, can make that decision on behalf of Ugandans. Ours was a scientific question," Dr Obuku said.

In coming up with the recommendation, the doctors looked at the impact of aging on the speed at which one processes information and his or her attentiveness. They also assessed the impact of aging on one's reasoning ability, language function, intelligence and wisdom.