

# Mak introduces eHealth postgraduate programme

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**KAMPALA.** Makerere University has added eHealth to its postgraduate programme menu as part of its efforts to digitalise health information and speed up service delivery.

The new postgraduate programme launched on Friday at Makerere University covers a diverse field concerned with the application of ICT to support organisations such as hospitals, and delivery of healthcare services in the country.

This interdisciplinary programme, according to authorities at Makerere University, introduces eHealth in the context of international health systems and global health challenges, supported by specialist courses covering areas such as public health informatics and telehealthcare.

The Master of Health Informatics

(MHI) programme is a two-year course offered to graduates who did Medical and Information Technology-related courses at undergraduate level. It will enable students to come up with software systems that can give timely health information at both individual and national level.

Speaking at the launch, Prof Nazarius Mbona Tumwesigye, the director of MHI at Makerere, said with such skills at hand, it will be possible for one to know a [disease] outbreak instantly, and medical doctors will know a patient's history by the use of application systems.

"You go to the hospital [and] they ask you for a paper where they can fill some information... And then you go to another department, they also want you to go with that same paper so that they can add some more information. That should stop in this modern era... and this delays work," Prof Tumwesigye said.

...a crime. So there is no way  
if a Muslim commits a crime we say  
no, there was no crime committed

nalists do not report that positive  
aspect of the police, the society is  
not informed," Mr Ochola said.

## CHALLENGES

**Problems. The new postgraduate programme in eHealth, however, comes at a time when the country is grappling with various recurrent problems, including long patient waiting hours, quack doctors, fake drugs, expiry of drugs, misdiagnosis and drug stock outs, among others in the health sector that have caused many preventable deaths.**

The full-time course jointly offered by Makerere University School of Public Health, with the College of Computing and Information Sciences, admitted its first cohort of 19 students in 2016, while the second attracted 25 students.

Mr Frank Tumwebaze, the Information Technology and Communications minister, who was the chief guest at the launch, appreciated the programme and observed that it is timely since his ministry is currently encouraging government agencies to take their services online.

Dr Eria Ssali, the principal of the University's College of Business and Management Sciences, who represented Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, the university Vice Chancellor, said: "Health informatics is one of the areas where this country was still lagging behind. No wonder we still rely on hard copy patient files in hospitals. With this programme, we hope to produce professions who use technology to digitise health information in order to ease service delivery."

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