

Kiruddu gets kidney treatment reagents

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KYENJOJO. Patients with kidney failure at Kiruddu Hospital have breathed a sigh of relief following the delivery of dialysis materials that had run out of stock since January.

The patients, who were initially paying Shs120,000, had to part with Shs412, 000 for two sessions per week due to the crisis.

The dialyser (artificial kidney), sodium bicarbonate and heparin (avoids blood clots) reagents, which were out of stock, are used in the dialysis treatment that filters and purifies the blood using a machine to keep one's body in balance when the kidneys fail to filter waste products from the blood which makes the body to be accumulated with toxins.

Shs60,000

Charge. Amount of money a patient pays for dialysis services at Kiruddu Hospital.

Ordinarily, patients at the hospital access dialysis at a subsidized Shs60, 000 per session.

As such, *Daily Monitor* in the September 7 edition, published an article "Patients decry high cost of kidney treatment at Kiruddu," highlighting the agony of the more than 110 patients which exposed them to a faster death as some of them could

no longer afford the weekly services.

Although National Medical Stores (NMS), mandated to procure and distribute the essential medical supplies, had earlier denied failure to deliver the reagents at any one moment, Dr Peter Eyoku, the head of Mulago's Renal Unit, confirmed yesterday that the former had finally delivered the materials three days after the story was published.

"It [the delivery] actually happened three days after [the story]... we are now supplying them [the patients] materials and drugs for blood. They can take us at least for the next one or two months," Dr Eyoku confirmed in a phone interview.

He could not, however, commit himself on whether the delivery of materials will remain stable when the new stock gets finished.

With the delivery of free reagents, Mr Patrick Seruyange, 30, one of the kidney patients depending on dialysis at Kiruddu Hospital, said they are now assured of the timely treatment every week.

"I am happy because the [dialysis] cost is more manageable now, though it's still high," Mr Seruyange said.

Kiruddu General Hospital in Kampala is the only government facility that currently provides dialysis services at a subsidised fee of Shs60, 000. The cost of dialysis is much higher in private health facilities with the services now costing between Shs270, 000 and Shs600, 000 per session.