

# Mulago unveils self-testing device for heart diseases

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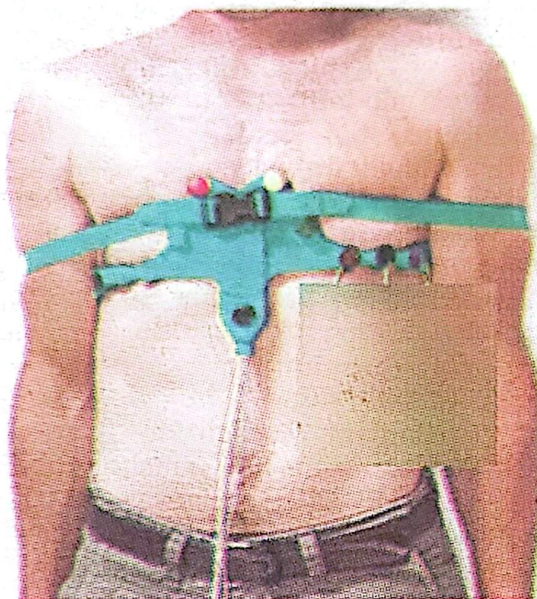
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**KAMPALA.** A new advanced reusable electrocardiogram (ECG) mobile belt, placed on one's bare chest to detect and record one's heart electrical activity, has been unveiled to ease access to heart disease screening.

Manufactured in Israel, the ECG belt was unveiled yesterday by administrators at the Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) at Mulago in Kampala.

The device, which is all-insulated and poses minimal risks to patients, can be operated by anyone, requires limited wiring and can be recharged and is more flexible than the old models.

"Unlike the older ECGs [electrocardiogram] which were bigger and could not be lifted, and even the current ones which have too many wires and need power to operate, this one [new model] has limited wires, poses almost no risk to patients and can be used anywhere," Dr Lameck Ssemogerere, the head of car-



**Innovation.** The new electrocardiogram is easy to use. It is sold at a market price of \$2,000 (about Shs7.2m). INTERNET PHOTO

diac critical care unit at UHI, said.

He was speaking at a cardiac disease stakeholders' meeting at UHI offices in Kampala.

With at least one in four patients at the institute diagnosed with hypertension, Mr Ssemogerere said the belt will be approved for hospital use and other outreaches once they conclude trials to ascer-

tain its effectiveness.

Sold at a market price of \$2,000 (about Shs7.2m), the ECG which has been used in several other countries, including USA and Israel for the last 12 years, can be used at home, in the field, during rescues, in aircraft and other remote areas.

Dr Martin Opio Otyek, the outgoing medical director at

Kitovu Hospital in Masaka District where the device has been tried under a medical study for the last one year, said one needs to only buy the device and connect it to a tablet to get results which can be interpreted by a general physician or a cardiologist.

## Easy to use

"It is very easy to use once you have bought it. You don't need to buy anything else. Secondly, it gives results faster - within one minute - saving almost half the time that the old one takes. With the old device, it is very easy to make a mistake, which is rare with the new one," he added.

A recent survey done by UHI indicates that one in every four adults has a heart problem. Similarly, one in every four babies, the survey showed, is born with a heart abnormality, with half of the cases requiring specialised surgery.

The factors responsible for the increase in heart diseases include, among other factors, poor lifestyle and poor diet.