

NDA warns public on antibiotic injection

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KAMPALA. The National Drug Authority (NDA) has issued an alert on the use of gentamycin injection, an anti-biotic that has registered severe side effects among patients.

The antibiotic is used to treat serious bacterial infections.

While addressing journalists yesterday at the NDA headquarters, the acting director of product safety, Ms Victoria Nambasa, said the authority had received several complaints from patients.

"Whereas these sides are documented as rare side effects following gentamycin injection, NDA has registered an increase in the frequency and severity of these reactions," Ms Nambasa said.

She said the side effects include; immediate severe headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, fainting, rash and itching.

“It is a specific batch that raised complaints that we have withdrawn. We could not recall the entire gentamycin because it is an essential antibiotic,” VICTORIA NAMBASA, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT SAFETY

Currently, Ms Nambasa said investigations are underway to assess the reported cases.

The drugs' authority has also asked health workers to use the product as per the prescriptions on the product label.

"Monitor patients using gentamycin for possible serious adverse effects and report to NDA any adverse reactions that occur when patients are using the product," Ms Nambasa added.

She said a few batches of the product that caused severe side effects have since been recalled, asserting that the product will continue to be used.

Meanwhile, the NDA executive secretary, Ms Donna Kusemererwa, said the authority will start giving financial rewards to whistleblowers who submit evidence on fake and substandard drugs on the market.

"We are working on a policy to reward the whistle blowers and hopefully we shall start doing so in the next financial year. We shall reward those who raise safety issues identified in the products," Ms Kusemererwa said.

She said a draft policy on how the incentive will work is awaiting discussion and approval by the NDA board chaired by Dr Medard Bitekyerezo.

Ms Kusemererwa said they would also crack down on hawkers dealing in herbal medicines which are not approved and registered by NDA.

She also asked broadcast media houses to always ask for a letter of authorisation from people selling herbs before they are advertised.