

Halt Hepatitis B vaccination, MPs order

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PARLIAMENT. Parliament's Health Committee has ordered private health facilities to stop carrying out Hepatitis B vaccination until the Health Ministry issues special approval.

If the Health Ministry complies with the order, only government facilities will carry out vaccination against Hepatitis B.

The order follows reports that private health facilities are using counterfeit Hepatitis B vaccines with the Committee directing that the government has to wipe out the fake vaccines from the market before allowing private facilities to resume vaccination.

National Drug Authority (NDA) on Tuesday kicked up a storm when it revealed that it had impounded counterfeit Hepatitis B vaccines from private health facilities and two immunisation camps from different parts of the country.

Laboratory tests

NDA executive director Medard Bitekyerezo yesterday told Parliament's Health Committee that the side effects of the counterfeit Hepatitis B vaccines have not been identified pending laboratory tests.

Dr Bitekyerezo singled out Serum Institute of India vaccine, packed in 10ml, as one of the common fake Hepatitis B vaccines on the market.

"The serum of India institute that comes as one ampule and is given as a single dose and imported by Norvik that is licensed by NDA can continue in private units because we have people who are already on this vaccination," Dr Bitekyerezo said.

The vaccines were impounded from Family Doctors' Clinic-Ntungamo, UMC Hospital-Bukoto, Malcolm Health Care-Kisaasi and Kampala Medical Chambers. Other facilities that were faulted are Mbarara Community Hospital, Devine Mercy, Mbarara City Clinic and Mayanja Memorial Hospital.

NDA also indicated that fake vaccines were impounded from immunisation camps at Mbale Central Market and Mbarara University camp which was organised by Sanyu Medical Centre, Katabi-Entebbe.

MP BUKENYA SAYS

Health Committee Chairman Michael Bukenya [Bukuya County] ruled that private facilities should only carry out Hepatitis B vaccination upon approval by the Health Ministry. "Vaccination should continue with public facilities where we are sure with the line of procurement. Private facilities should suspend. There should not be any challenges [by NDA]..." he said.