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KAMPALA I placed a casual courtesy call to Mulago hospital's spokesperson Enock Kusasira on Wednesday. But halfway into our chat, he alerted me of an ongoing neurosurgical camp which was ending and hinted there could be a chance for me to witness brain surgeries in the theatre.

I dashed out of the newsroom together with Mr Stephen Wandera, our photojournalist, to Mulago where Mr Kusasira led us to the general theatre.

But intriguing questions lingered

Inside brain surgery theatre at Mulago

on my mind; how someone's skull can be opened up by doctors to access the brain.

This puzzle prompted me to ask Dr Micheal Edgar Muhumuza, a senior consultant neurosurgeon at Mulago hospital, to allow me observe the procedure alongside our photographer.

But Dr Muhumuza was adamant only photographers would be allowed in because of the limited space

in the theatre. But somehow I found myself in.

Inside the theatre

We pulled off our clothes and slipped into full theatre gear as we were ushered into the first operating theatre. Here a spinal surgery had entered its fourth hour, having commenced about 8am. The operating table was swarmed with medics. Only a section of the patient's back-

bone set for surgery was exposed, leaving the rest of the body covered. The beeping sounds, at times frightening, welcomed us into the theatre.

After a few minutes, we were ushered into yet another theatre where a sedated patient's head had been propped between two metallic pieces ready for opening. At the time, nurses were scrubbing another head ready for the skull opening. The hair is shaved off before the scalp is

peeled off in layers to allow access to the skull. But because of the unusual procedure, Dr Muhumuza asked us to take a short break and return after the skull has been opened up. But none of us was brave enough to see an exposed human brain. However, Dr Muhumuza later explained that his team had used a drill to cut the bone to expose the medulla, a layer, to access the brain.

Dr Muhumuza said after removal of the tumour, the bleeding is first managed before the skull is closed by placing back the bone. He said a metric saw can also be used to cut the bone.