

Adults to screen for sickle cells

By Andrew Ssenyonga

The health ministry has disclosed that adults will start screening for sickle cell anaemia in a move to reduce on the burden of the disease in the country.

Sarah Opendi, the health minister in charge of general duties, said regional referral hospitals and national referral hospital, with the help of the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL) in Butabika, Kampala, will conduct the screening, especially couples.

"The burden had recently increased due to a number of adults who get married before routine checkups. This has been due to lack of screening kits in our hospitals and adequate funds to support the cause," she explained.

Opendi made the revelation during the handover of sh110m in proceeds from the recently concluded Kabaka birthday run to CPHL to procure screening kits in the fight against sickle cell trait at Bulange, Mengo yesterday.

The money was handed to the Government by the Katikkiro of Buganda, Charles Peter Mayiga, with the kingdom partners who included Airtel, Post bank and Vision Group.

According to Opendi, the laboratory has been screening only children, but with the funds they will be able to screen adults.

"With the funds, we are extending the screening from the new-born babies to cover every Ugandan who needs the services, especially those who want to get married," she said.

Northern Uganda has the highest prevalence of sickle cell trait and malaria, standing at 18.6%.

This was revealed in a survey done in 2014 by the health ministry with support from Makerere College of Health Sciences and Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

See related story
on page 48

s in August