Aga Khan Hospital acquires hi-tech equipment

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KAMPALA. Ugandans can now easily access early diagnosis of complicated non-communicable diseases such as cancer without travelling to India, after the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) in Nairobi, acquiring advanced technical equipment.

The $ 6m (about Shs22b) ultra-modern Positron Emission Tomography (PET) CT scanner and Cyclotron, the first of its kind in East and Central Africa, offers high level of accuracy in cancer diagnosis and treatment response evaluation.

Mr Shawn Bolouki, the Chief Executive Officer of AKUH, said the new technology, also critical in the diagnosis of neurological conditions such as dementia and epilepsy, will revolutionise diagnostics and treatment in the region. "Aga Khan University Hospital continues to be at the front of the fight against non-communicable diseases through evidence-based medicine backed by research, a team-based approach and modern technology," Mr Bolouki said.

Professor Sudhir Vinayak, the chairperson of the Department of Radiology at the hospital, explained that the PET CT scan is an imaging test that is used to diagnose disease[illegible]n treatment, to find out how a condition is progressing and to see how effective treatment is on the disease.

"It will enable doctors to identify health threats at the cell-level thus giving them the best view and time of treatment for complex diseases such as cancer and heart diseases, brain and other central nervous system problems, thereby improving treatment outcomes," he said.

He added: "A cyclotron is a type of compact particle accelerator used to produce small quantities of radioactive isotopes, a substance required for the PET imaging."

Information generated from PET CT scans enables oncologists to make better treatment and follow up plans for cancer patients, critical in making treatment decisions, according to Dr Asim Jamal, the section head of medical Oncology at the hospital.

While an MRI and CT scan shows how a particular part of the body looks, a PET/CT scan can reveal how it is functioning which is a vital aspect for cardiologists to detect damages on the heart.

Professor Vinayak said "PET/CT service will be offered as an outpatient procedure, unless the patient is already admitted to the hospital.

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