

More kidney transplants at Mulago

Mulago Hospital is conducting the fifth edition of kidney transplants and eight pairs are expected to be operated.

BY TONNY ABET

Medical experts at Mulago National Referral Hospital have started conducting new kidney transplants to save patients with kidney failure.

Dr Rosemary Byanyima, the hospital executive director, confirmed the development to Daily Monitor yesterday evening and said they would provide more information later.

"We are working, but we are going to invite the press on day four because we are working almost like for two weeks, so we don't want to disrupt people when they are working," she said.

"Mr Emmanuel Ainebyoona, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, said: "The 5th edition of kidney transplants" in Mulago Hospital started yesterday, and that eight pairs are expected to be worked on."

Mulago Hospital conducted the first kidney transplant in December 2023, along with a team of medical experts

from India. This successful surgery involved getting a healthy kidney from a donor and transplanting it into a 24-year-old man whose kidneys no longer functioned.

After completing the third edition of the transplants in July 2025, Prof Frank Asiimwe, the transplant surgeon, said they were aiming to make organ transplantation a habit at Mulago Hospital.

"When something happens for the first time, one could say it was an accident or a fluke; that was December 2023," he said. "The second time (in 2024), one may think it was a coincidence. But when it happens for the third time (in July 2025), it has become a habit."

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Doctors check on a kidney donor at Mulago National Referral Hospital on November 22, 2024. PHOTO/ISAAC KASAMANI

BACKGROUND

In July 2025, Mulago National Referral Hospital's medical experts collaborated with doctors from Kidney Care in the United Kingdom to perform four additional kidney transplants in Uganda.

The new surgeries brought the total number of patients who had benefited from the free transplants at Mulago to nine, since the maiden transplant was done in December 2023.

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Dr Peace Bagasha, a kidney specialist at the facility, explained how they select beneficiaries.

"For one to be eligible for transplants, they should be a dialysis patient. So far, we have over 400 patients on dialysis in Uganda, making them potentially eligible patients for transplant," she explained last year.

"Patients with terminal kidney disease also become eligible for transplant. Our 16-year-old had serious malaria, and this is one of the causes of kidney failure," she added.

Besides the requirement that the patient's donor must be a close relative, Prof Asiimwe also indicated that they assess the patient's ability to continue buying the medicines that they should take after the transplants. He said it costs around Shs1.5m per month.

The organs should be donated free of charge (no buying or selling of organs), and the donors should not be coerced, according to the provisions in the Uganda Human Organ Donation and Transplant Act.