

Bugiri hospital's long wait for repair of faulty X-ray machine

For the last three years, Bugiri General Hospital has failed to avail x-ray services due to a broken down x-ray machine.

BY RONALD SEEBE

For over three years, the X-ray machine at Bugiri General Hospital has been out of service, compelling patients to travel to Jinja Regional Referral Hospital or Mbale Regional Referral Hospital for imaging.

Others are forced to seek care at private facilities, often incurring significant out-of-pocket expenses.

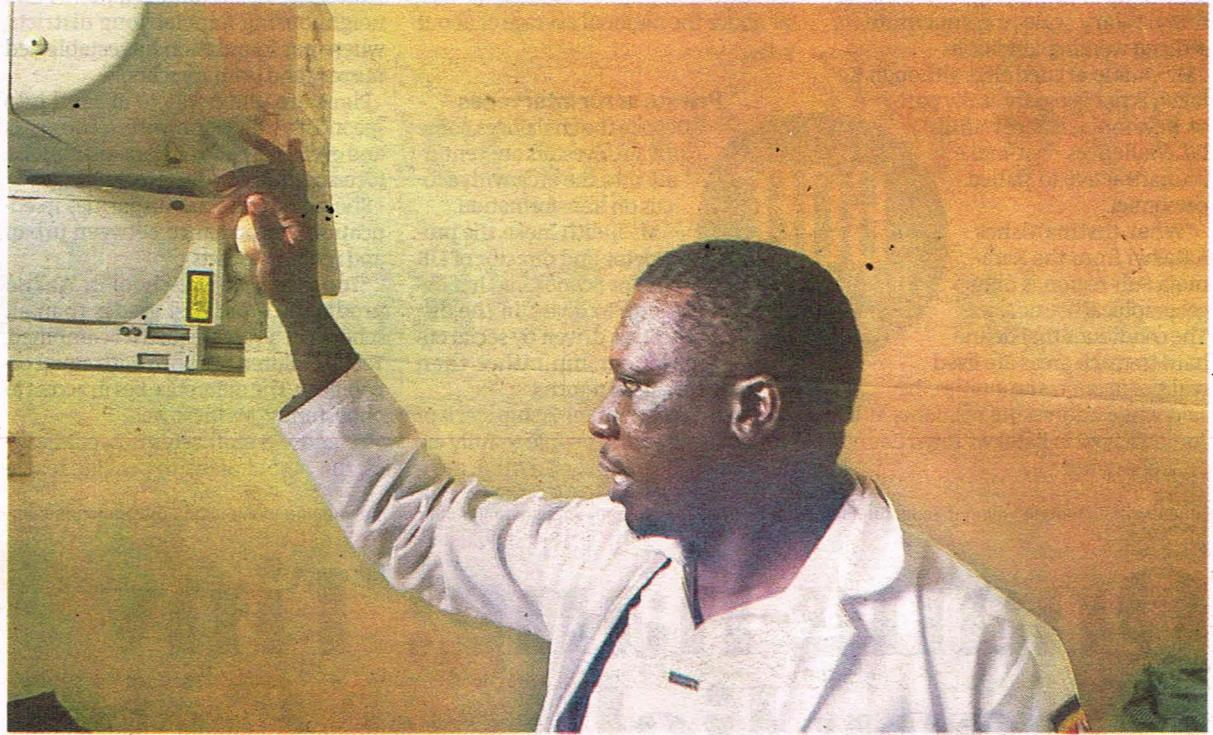
X-ray services are critical for diagnosing and managing several internal health conditions such as bone fractures, and diagnosing respiratory and cardiovascular ailments, among others.

The hospital administrators say the situation reflects a deeper systemic failure, as the facility continues to operate without a basic diagnostic tool, leaving both health workers and patients with limited options.

Mr Julius Mujumba, the head of the radiology department at Bugiri General Hospital, said the lack of diagnostic equipment has left thousands of patients in medical limbo, facing delays, misdiagnoses, and expensive referrals to private facilities.

He explained that although the hospital received an X-ray and an ultrasound machine in good working condition, the X-ray machine soon broke down, with its motherboard failing and the screen going black, leaving it unusable.

"All concerned are aware as written reminders regarding this issue have been submitted through the district health department to the Ministry of Health without a response," he said.



Mr Julius Mujumba shows the faulty X-ray machine. PHOTO/RONALD SEEBE

CURRENT CRISIS

The X-ray machine's motherboard failed hence a blank screen. Mr Julius Mujumba, head of the radiology department at Bugiri General Hospital, said that the hospital awaits response from the Ministry of Health to sort out the matter.

Mr Mujumba said sadly, repairing the X-ray machine is costly and complex, requiring more than Shs200m. "Therefore, until the ministry and the repair team act, patients will continue to face delays, misdiagnoses, and costly referrals," he said.

He added that Bugiri General Hospital, situated on the Tororo-Busia Highway, serves a high-risk corridor where

numerous road accidents occur.

"Patients often arrive with chest pains, bone fractures, and lung conditions, yet we have to refer them to Jinja or Mbale for X-ray services because we are currently unable to provide them," Mr Mujumba said.

Bugiri General Hospital, which serves Bugiri, Namayingo, Namutumba, and Bugweri District districts, was constructed in 1950.

However, the facility has never had a major rehabilitation or expansion to handle the growing number of patients amid lack of essential equipment and staff shortages.

Local politicians, like Bugiri District

chairperson, Mr Kasajja Mulumba, expressed frustrations, arguing that the situation should have been addressed immediately but the district cannot raise the funds.

He said Bugiri District Local Government is actively engaging the Ministry of Health to ensure an increased budget for health services in the district.

He, however, expressed hope that through the district's proposals, the government has allocated over Shs80 trillion for the reconstruction and equipping of the facility.

SHS200M
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