

CHUK Acquires Medical Equipment

By Innocent Gahigana

The Kigali Central University Hospital (CHUK) has acquired four new 'glostavents' machines that supply oxygen to the patients while on theatre operation.

Rwanda has previously had only one 'glostavent' machine at the Rutongo District Hospital in Kigali-Ngali Province. The latest acquisitions bring to five the number of machines in the whole country during the last nine months.

The five machines, with a production capacity of five litres of oxygen per minute, were secured from a UK based Diamedica under the Belgium-Rwanda cooperation at a cost of UK £14,000 each.

Dr. Bill Casey from the UK said that the machines are very reliable, reserving voltage for about seven minutes whenever power goes off abruptly, thus enabling surgery to continue until alternative power supply is put on.

He said that they were conducive to the African medical environment, adding that the machines had been in use in the United Kingdom for fifteen years but with new modifications made on oxygen concentration cylinder and power control systems.

In a similar development, Richard Tully, the Development Engineer of the Diamedica Company, said the machines are convenient to countries experiencing power shortage and expensive oxygen purchase for theatre operations.

Asked about spare parts for the machines, he said, "We are going to stock many of them at the CHUK mechanical workshop to facilitate the technicians."

He urged the technicians to clearly recognize the oxygen system for the machines and assured them of assistance from the manufacturing firm, Diamedica, in case of any technical fault.

According to Dr. Henry Bukwirwa, the head of Anaesthesia Department in CHUK, the machines are to fortify the surgical procedures as they are simple to use than previous ones whose operations were complicated.

Bukwirwa said, "It is quite promising to have these machines that are simple to use. With them, the most considerable factor to embark on is the life of patients."

The operators of these machines are to get broad training on their operation and maintenance to enable them attain their (machines) durability of about thirty years.

"To have effectual longevity for the machines, there must be proper standardization for their easy operations and maintenance," he explained, adding that the 2001 survey conducted in all countrywide hospitals indicated inconsistency in the operations and maintenance of surgical machines.

Meanwhile, Rwanda is the fourth African state alongside Malawi, Zambia and Nigeria to acquire the machines in the last two years.