

Makerere University to Perform DNA Tests

©New Vision (Kampala)

July 3, 2001

Kikonyogo Ngatya

Makerere University Medical School is to start DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) tests to resolve parentage disputes.

Makerere

<http://www.ugandamission.net/aboutug/articles/makerere.html>[4/29/2011 10:51:44 AM]

Prof. Wilson Byarugaba, the head of Human Genetics section in the medical school, said yesterday that they had acquired the necessary equipment. People who are obliged to undergo DNA parentage tests have been sending samples to South Africa at a minimum cost of about U\$500 per test. Byarugaba said the cost of carrying out the tests in Makerere was yet to be determined but it would be a lot cheaper than sending them outside. He said the department, with the help of Johannesburg Institute for Medical Research, was training medical workers on how to carry out the tests. "We are also soon carrying out tests country-wide to determine Uganda's genetic markers which we shall use as a background against which to determine individual cases," Byarugaba said and added the tests would also help the police in investigating forensic related crimes. Such crimes include rape, defilement and murders. He also said Uganda would be able to treat patients using the gene therapy, and also carrying out research on different disease-causing agents by identifying their DNA make-up. "We hope also to develop vaccines and other biotechnology using the DNA tests for combating different diseases," Byarugaba said.