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Uganda: Mosquito Named After Local Scientist

Arthur Baguma 28 February 2010

Kampala — Great inventions of the world have been inspired by great thinkers. Famous people in history have made scientific discoveries and these discoveries have been named after them. And on this long list, a Ugandan scientist has been added.

A team of renowned international mosquito taxonomists has named a new subgenus of the genus *Stegomyia (Aedes)* mosquitoes after Dr. Louis Godfrey Mukwaya, the assistant director, and head of the department of entomology, at the Uganda Virus Research Institute, Entebbe (UVRI).

The mosquito is named after him in recognition of his contribution to medical entomology and knowledge towards *St. simpsoni*, now known as *St. (Mukwaya) simpsoni*.

A detailed description of Mukwaya's discovery was recently published in the Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society of London by three renowned mosquito taxonomists - John F.

Reinert, Ralph E. Harbach, and Ian J. Kitching of the Center for Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary Entomology, Gainesville, Florida and the department of Entomology, the Natural History Museum, London, U.K are the authors of the article.

Who is Mukwaya?

Mukwaya joined the East African Virus Research Institute (now UVRI) in 1965 as a trainee entomologist and the first Ugandan scientist to work at this institute.

He had previously, worked at Makerere University College as a graduate research assistant in the department of Zoology where he bred and colonised a grasshopper called *Ruspolia deferens* (nsenene) in the laboratory.

At the institute, he has risen through a number of ranks to the present substantive post of assistant director (Research).

He went to Kangavve Preparatory Primary School, Kijaguzo Full Primary (in Luwero District), Lubaga Junior Secondary School, St. Mary's College Kisubi and later

Makerere University College.

He holds a B.Sc. degree of the University of London obtained at Makerere University College in Zoology, Botany and Chemistry. He has a PhD. in medical entomology specialising in feeding behaviour and behavioural genetics of mosquitoes.

He was a post-doctoral fellow (1973-74) in Prof. Vincent G. Dethier's laboratory, a renowned scholar of sensory physiology and insect behaviour, in the department of biology, University of Princeton US.

In 1975, he was elected fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London and a year later appointed to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Expert Panel of Vector Biology and Control in Geneva.

At the end of 1979, WHO awarded Mukwaya a fellowship to study insect pathology at the laboratory of insects affecting man and animals at Gainesville, Florida, US, with a view of starting a laboratory for biological control of mosquitoes in Uganda.

In 1981, the US Academy of Sciences National Research Council, invited Mukwaya to participate in drawing up guidelines for mosquito field research in developing countries.

He was among the scientists

who met at Imperial College, London in 2001 to discuss risks and benefits with a view of developing a field trial with genetically modified mosquitoes for the control of malaria.

A genetically modified mosquito is immune to any particular malaria parasite and loses the ability to transmit the disease.

Mukwaya has won several competitive research grants and served as a Consultant on various projects including WHO Consultant for the yellow fever outbreak in Nigeria which claimed about 10,000 lives in two years.

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