



## Staff transfers at Mwananyamala Hospital: Wrong solution

On 12 April 2010, the Dar es Salaam regional Commissioner Mr. William Lukuvi announced through media that 96 health workers at Mwananyamala Hospital have been transferred to other working stations, majority within Dar es Salaam region. He attributed the transfer to the longstanding poor health care service provision at the hospital.

We doubt if mere shuffling of staff around Dar es Salaam region is the right solution to those problems. Citizens are experiencing same problems in almost all public facilities in Dar es Salaam region. Historically, transfer would usually spread the vices. Again, this particular transfer seems to have punished bad and good workers, which is unjust, and therefore an indication of a weak management.

Service users have complained about poor quality service delivery at Mwananyamala Hospital (and other public health facilities) for years. Complaints are usually regarding malpractices, negligence, unfriendly attitude of service providers, unavailability of medicine and diagnostic equipment, bribery, overcrowding, and long waiting period to be served.

We would like to propose some measures to address this chronic problem not only at Mwananyamala Hospital but all health facilities across the country.

First, we expect strengthened hospital management and administration including corrective action against health workers who maltreat patients and whose performance is unsatisfactory. This may include firing on chronic behavior instead of transferring.

Second, ensure timely availability of quality working tools including medicines, equipment and supplies. Some available working tools are as good as no tools. Third, ensure adequate space and beds for pregnant women before and after delivery.

The fourth measure is to improve pay and benefits of all cadres at health facilities. While some health workers are entitled to some kind of financial allowances, many are not. This leads to inequality in pay and demoralization of especially the frontline workers.

The fifth measure, which is very important in our opinion is to make sure that, implementation plans and budgets, income and expenditures are transparent to both health workers and service users and are publicly available. It is not enough to say that the hospital does not have enough budgets to deliver services. How much is not enough, and how have we prioritized what we have?

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