

Embracing TB Lamp Diagnostic Tool May Boost Fight Against TB in Kenya, Africa



1 Researchers Use TB Lamp Machine at the Kangemi Laboratory

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Last month, a new TB laboratory was launched in Nairobi's Kangemi Health Centre by Nairobi Governor and Japanese Ambassador to Kenya.

In the lab, a new diagnostic tool, Loop mediated amplification method (TB LAMP) was installed, promising strengthened fight against TB.

Governor Sonko, in his speech, stated that he was impressed by the new machine, and promised to support the push to have it recognized in Kenya.

Approved by World health organization (WHO), the machine can detect TB in less than an hour. This is a huge contrast to the GeneXpert, and others, which take several hours to detect the disease.

The fact that it has a very high sensitivity makes detection of TB easier, and will be very

important in detecting the cases which could not be easily detected before.

This alone will increase hundredfold, the number of people detected, and the duration under which they are detected.

Made by the Japanese technology, the machine can process many samples at a go, making it possible to diagnose many patients at once, and reducing the cost per single test.

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In a country like Kenya, where healthcare, and especially TB is very expensive, this machine come much to the rescue of the low income earners.

Going by recent TB statistics from the National TB Programme, more than 40 percent of the cases of TB go undetected, because of the nature of testing, the long diagnosis time, and the huge costs associated with this process. It is against the backdrop of these challenges that this machines come in, to plug this hole.

RESULTS Japan, the NGO that installed the machine for the first time in Kenya at the facility, is in robust efforts to have it

recognized as one of the testing methods in the country.

The fight against TB calls for a much speeded up diagnosis and treatment which is only possible with superior machines like TB LAMP.

Kenya, being one of the high burdened countries, needs much of these machines to reduce the catastrophic costs associated with TB disease.

That therefore calls on the government, in recognition of the unique nature and features of this machine, to invest in it to spur efforts for the fight of this disease, which kills thousands annually, and affects the economic situation of hundreds of thousands others.

The NGO has held several discussions with various health actors in the country, to preach the efficiency of the machine, and its important value in the TB eradication efforts. It worth of note that the negotiations for this machine to be listed are at the homestretch.

Indeed, the initiative has been factored in the country's National TB Strategic Plan for TB from 2019-2021. It is expected that once ratified, the machine will be installed in various facilities across Kenya, where patents can be tested faster, more accurately, and cheaply.

It should be noted that the superior features of the machine have led to its approval in seven other countries in Africa, and 14 others across the world.

In such places, it has produced great results, and promoted in a great way, the fight against TB in those countries.

Kenya, I believe, should join in this bandwagon, to stem up the long standing fight against TB with the use of this machine.

The Writer is Kenya's nominee for the Burt Award for African Writing