WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1991

Aids test scandal at KNH

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nate female staff members chatting. I approached them and enquired about the direction to the

clinic undertaking Aids tests on

students travelling abroad. I was

some leaving for Poona University in India, I said.

“One of the women pulled me

aside and whispered: ‘You have

been told about the amount of.

money you should pay?‘.

“I told her I’d been advised I

could easily get one for Sh200 but  
I didn’t’ know where to obtain one.

“She told me it was not Sh200 but Sh350, adding:’ ‘But you can get the other one (genuine) at an even higher fee and never go to

India. You know, sometimes they

can even indicate you have Aids

because some people are jealous

end do not want others to go out

of the country’.

“She told me the process involved in the genuine one

was very long and if they detected

even a minor disease I wouldn’t

go to India.

“After the lecture, I finally

yielded and agreed to part with

Sh3&) as she did not have loose

change.  
‘Where are the university

forms.’ the middle-aged woman

asked me. ¡ pretended to Iive

forgotten to carry them feigning

Ignorance that I didn’t think they

were required.

“The woman handed me a yellow piece of paper, advised me to

write my official names, wrap up

the money with it and give it to

them. All these took place at an isolated corner where I had been

taken to.

“The woman then instructed

me to wait for her on the verandah while she processed the

certificate.

“After about 15 minutes, she

emerged from a room along the

verandah, gave me a rectangular

piece of paper and asked me to

examine it to see whether I was

satisfied. It was complete with

the hospital’s address and stamp,

a reference number, date the title

Medical Certificate HTLV, and

a signature, supposedly a

doctor’s.

“It seemed in order and I said

as much. The woman then told

me not to disclose to anybody

how 1 obtained the certificate.

“ if anybody asks you where

you got it, just say it is from Kenyatta National Hospital because

if the Government knows about

this, the man who helped me get

it may Lose his job’, she told me.

“She had something else to

say. ‘You know, I knew this man

when my brother’s son wanted to

go abroad and he helped me get

his certificate. I would not want

him to lose his job. I quickly left

the hospital and returned to the

office.

The letter HTLV on the certificate stand for Human T. Lymphocyte Virus, the old name for

the Aids virus. The current name

is HIV for Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus. ‘

. The certificate reads: “This is

to certify that ...has been examined and tested negative for

HTLV. On ciLnical examination, no abnormalities detect

ed. HTLV (Eiisa)-Negative.

Urinalysis-Nad. Stool -normal.

Contacted for a comment, the

director of the hospital, Dr Nelson Agata, dismissed the certificate as a forgery and denied any

knowledge of a scandal involving

Aids tests.

“What I know is that we officially charge these students going

to India ShlOO per person for a

full medical examination, which

includes an AIDS test,” the director said.

Pr Agata has a copy of the “bogus’ certificate which we gave

him.

On Mondy, a 23-year-old student (name withheld) told the

Nation it took him 10 minutes to

get his certificate. He is scheduled to leave for India on July 15.

He told us he had arrived at

the hospital it 2 pm and enquired

from a security guard where the

Aids testing office was. The

guard took him inside a room and

told him to wait. He returned

with another man in a suit.

The man told the student to

produce the money to “catalyse

the process” and enable him to

get the certificate immediately

and without much fuss.

The student told us: “I went

there (KNH to get an HIV test

as required by the Ministry of

Education, but I was shocked to

be issued with a certificate saying

that [am medically fit and HJV

negative, 10 minutes later even

before 1 was examined and tested.”