Aids spread threatens blood stocks

By OTULA OWUOR

At least five per cent of blood donated to the blood banks tested HIV positive a fad which has seriously affect the stocks at the bank.

The head of the national blood transfusion service, Dr Jack Nyamongo said in Nairobi yesterday that "although data from screening of transfusion blood shows that five per cent of the donors are infected with the Aid virus, in some parts of the country up to 10 per cent are infected. "

He said that because of the fear and myths associated with Aids, blood donation in Nairobi dropped from 26,000 units to 8,000 during the last decade.

"This is a major problem because our population has increased and medical operations requiring transfusion have increased tremendously," he said.

Dr Nyamongo, was delivering a special lecture to students at the Medical Training Centre. He said that nearly 27,000 Kenyans have Aids, but the number of those infected with the virus is nearly a million.

He said the country's blood transfusion service has designed new strategies to obtain blood from groups that are considered to be low risk. This year, the percentage of donated blood found to be HIV-positive dropped to 3.9 because low risk groups were targetted, he said "We are being forced to go to younger groups in rural areas," he said and added that Aids is no longer a threat only to those aged 25 to 40. The group has expanded to include those aged 16 to 50.

He said that the Aids infection tended to be higher among donors who are friends or relatives of those who needed blood transfusion.

"The increase of Aids is a real problem yet Kenyans behave as if

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