Uganda's Aids spread rate falls

By EDMOND KIZITO

NATION Correspondent

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A report just released by the

Uganda's Ministry of Health says

that the rate of the spread of Aids

in the country fell by more than

half in 1993 relative to the previous

two years.

The report, received by the

*Nation* on Friday, says the rate

.fell to 24 per cent from nearly 50

per cent in 1991.

"There was a noticeable decline

in the rate of increase of

HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency

Virus) infection at most of the

sites (surveyed)," the report said.

But it warned the prevalence of

the disease could be much higher:

"Although the figures are accurate,

they do not represent the

complete picture of HIV/Aids in

Uganda no since they were derived from health facilities which

may not reflect the magnitude of

the Aids situation (in the com·

munity)," it said.

The report is the government's

most authoritative document on

the epidemic and it forms the basis

for its planning.

Uganda has one of the world's

highest incidences of Aids (Acquired

Immune Deficiency Syndrome),

which attacks the human

body's immune system, destroying

its ability to resist disease.

Up to 1.5 million people, or nine

per cent of the country's population

is infected with the HIV virus

which causes Aids, official

figure show.

Statistics released by the government

in 1992 indicate the

number of Aids victims doubled

every year since 1985 when Uganda's

first cases were reported, mainly because of woefully inadequate

health services.

More than 23,000 persons

share one doctor in Uganda,

where average income per person

is just over Sh200,000

(KSh11,764) a year.

Uganda declared an emergency

Aids Control Programme in 1990

which heavily promotes condom

use, and launched a mostly

foreign funded programme to

educate the population on how to

avoid catching the disease.

Observers say the programme

which. sometimes employs indoctrination

tactics • has worked

well, scaling down greatly the incidence

of Aids in the country.

The report said more people

suffer from Aids in the towns

than in the rural areas, where

more than 90 per cent of Uganda's

16.6 million population lives.