STUDY | Medic calls for more research

Expert warns

on fresh Aids

cure claims

Researcher urges

the public to remain

cautious, warning

there is still no

cure for disease

**BY MIKE MWANIKI**

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A leading researcher yesterday

issued an alert

over claims that an

anti-cancer drug has proven

to be an effective Aids cure.

Dr Patrick Orege of the

Kenya Medical Research Institute

in Kisumu urged the

public to remain cautious,

warning that there was no

cure for Aids yet.

Two patients were purportedly

cured of Aids after being

treated by Dr Barasa Situma,

who administered methotrexate

— an anti-cancer treatment

drug — and a cocktail of other

drugs in Nairobi.

“The purported cure on the

two patients is referred to as

a ‘chance-finding’ and an interesting

observation which is

however not (beneficial to the

public) since it involves only

two patients.

**Document failed cases**

“In any case, we don’t know

the number of other patients

who were administered with

the drugs and failed,” Dr

Orege said.

In a story featured in the

*Nation* on Tuesday (DN2, August

27), Dr Situma claimed

the HIV patients had turned

negative after being tested at

three laboratories — Cresent

Medical Aid Kenya, Lancet Lab

and Kemri in Nairobi.

“The public should not be

duped into using the drug

which is a known treatment

for cancer and not HIV,” Dr

Orege, who is also a former

director of the National Aids

Control Council said.

At the same time, he dismissed

the decision by Dr

Situma to use the services

of three laboratories in determining

the HIV results of the

patients as “inconsistent with

research methodology”.

“To achieve consistent results,

Dr Situma should have

utilised one laboratory and

enrolled between 200 to 300

patients in his trials instead of

being enthusiastic in announcing

the results involving two

patients,” he said.

Dr Orege continued: “I

would like to advise Dr Situma

to develop a proposal

on the treatment and get in

touch with medical scientists

at either the University of

Nairobi’s Kenyatta National

Hospital or Kenya Medical

Research Institute.”

He warned that methotrexate

was known to have adverse

effects in the treatment of cancer

and should be administered

with “a lot of care”.