

## **Background**

Hospitals are large complexes that are occupied with patients and visitors who are unfamiliar with the layout of the building and procedures to take in case of a fire. Critical areas in hospitals on the other hand have several potential sources of fire, which if not regulated can result into fatal accidents, yet there are so many helpless people in these areas.

## **Objectives**

The study had the following objectives; identifying the fire safety measures in critical areas of Jinja Regional Referral hospital, whether the availed fire safety measures were functional, finding out whether critical area workers had the knowledge of using the fire safety measures and lastly to establish adherence of the hospital to National fire safety policies.

## **Methods**

This was a cross sectional study involving the healthcare workers in critical areas at Jinja Regional referral hospital. The hospital was sampled purposively on the basis of being a public hospital. The study included all the health workers in critical areas that are present at the time of the study. This implies that the study was a census in the different critical areas in the hospital. Purposive sampling was used to select four key informants. The Data collection techniques included interviews, desk Reviews and observations.

## **Results**

The findings indicated that of the critical areas studied; only 3 (33.3%) had fire extinguishers. The extinguishers were inadequate in addition to being past their due date for service, implying that all of them were non-functional. The critical areas had no fire detection and early warning system at all. 66.7% of the critical areas had emergency exits, but they were all locked, which rendered them non-functional.

About 31 (40.3%) of the respondents admitted they knew how to operate any of the fire safety equipment available and most of them, 13 (41.9%) were well versed with a sand bucket. 9.1% could operate an extinguisher. These figures of knowledge were quite low and they came along with low level of staff training in fire safety that was reported by the respondents. Jinja hospital does not have a known fire safety committee, a designated budget for fire safety and the inadequate fire suppression equipment and means of egress are non-functional. These gaps imply that this hospital has a very minimal adherence to National fire safety policies.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study concluded that Jinja Regional Referral hospital had inadequate functional fire safety measures in its critical areas and therefore recommended that the hospital provides adequate fire detection, fire alarms, suppression and evacuation measures, which it should have all workers trained in their use. Finally, the hospital should formulate a fire safety committee and also allocate part of its budget to fire safety.