

# How PhD graduands intend

A total of 213 students are graduating with PhDs at Makerere University's 76th graduation ceremony, which began on Tuesday and concludes today, February 27, at the institution's Freedom Square. They form part of the 9,295 students graduating across various disciplines at Uganda's premier university. **Sylvia Katushabe and Jane Nafula** bring profiles of selected PhD graduates from the College of Health Sciences.

## PEACE BAGASHA



**Topic: Quality of life among patients with kidney failure: A mixed methods prospective analysis exploring dynamic, 12-month survival and associated factors**

Ms Bagasha conducted a mixed methods cohort study examining 12-month quality of life (QoL) and survival among 364 Ugandan adults with kidney failure. Qualitative findings highlighted the heavy symptom burden, mental health challenges, financial strain, declining social support, reliance on faith, and limited resources.

## CAROLINE BIRUNGI



**Topic: Risky sexual behaviour among individuals with severe mental illness in Uganda: prevalence, correlates, perceptions, and effectiveness of a risky sexual behaviour reduction intervention.**

Qualitative insights from Ms Birungi's study revealed structural and

institutional barriers, including stigma, insufficient safeguarding, and poor integration of sexual and reproductive health services within mental healthcare.

## JOSEPHINE CHISOM EZ-ENWAKA



**Topic: Genetic determinants of type-2 diabetes mellitus in individuals of African ancestry.**

Using large genomic datasets, she identified four significant genetic loci linked to the disease and highlighted ancestry-specific risk patterns. Her findings advance precision medicine approaches for diabetes management in African populations.



## HARUNA MUHMOOD KIRYOWA

**Topic: Prevalence of periodontal disease in patients with diabetes mellitus attending Kiruddu National Referral Hospital: prevalence, risk factors, association with glycaemic control and insulin resistances**

Mr Kiryowa examined gum diseases among diabetic patients. He found high prevalence associated with poor glycaemic control, insulin resistance, and low formal education levels. Gum treatment improved diabetic status. He recommends further studies on oral health interventions to enhance diabetes management.

## JOY LOUISE GUMIKIRIZA



**Topic: Cultural adaptation and evaluation of WHO support intervention for reduction of psychological distress among caregivers of older persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in Uganda**

Gumikiriza evaluated the adaptation of the WHO Support intervention to reduce psychological distress among caregivers of older persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Her research showed reductions in caregiver distress and depression and

improvements in quality of life, highlighting the effectiveness of culturally sensitive psychosocial interventions. This work provides a scalable model for dementia caregiving in low-resource settings and contributes to global mental health and implementation science.

## JEAN DIEU IRAGENA



**Topic: Roll-out and scale-up of WHO-endorsed technologies for tuberculosis diagnosis in Africa: opportunities, strengths, and challenges.**

Mr Iragena assessed the rollout of WHO-endorsed tuberculosis diagnostic technologies in Africa. Findings revealed slow adoption, with median adoption times ranging from 2.5 to 9 years. Key enabling factors included funding availability and political commitment, while barriers included limited laboratory preparedness, inadequate staff training, and policy constraints. His work led to the development of the Guide for Rapid Uptake and Rollout of TB Diagnostics in Africa.

## HERBERT KIYIGA

**Topic: Effectiveness, acceptability, and uptake of early versus standard intrauterine contraception following provision of first-trimester medical post-abortion care in Central Uganda**

Mr Kiyiga studied early versus standard intrauterine contraception after first-trimester post-abortion care in Central Uganda. With fertility returning within two weeks and many women failing to return for contraception, his research highlights missed opportunities that expose women to unintended pregnancies.

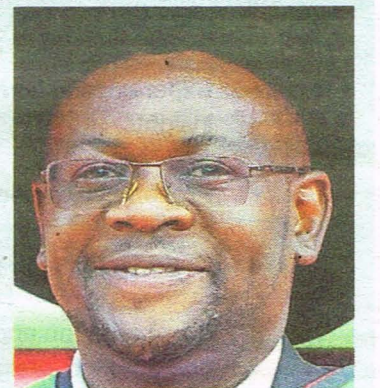
## CHRISTOPHER KINTU



**Topic: The predictive utility of polygenic risk scores for chronic kidney disease in Africans**

Mr Kintu investigated the applicability of polygenic risk scores (PRS) for chronic kidney disease (CKD) in African populations, addressing the underrepresentation of Africans in genetic studies. He found

that European-derived PRS performed poorly among Africans and developed ancestry-specific scores for improved predictive accuracy. His work also explored causal effects of lipid traits on kidney function, identifying significant links between low-density lipoproteins and estimated glomerular filtration rate and revealed interactions between immune-related genes and kidney disease risk.



## HARRIET KISEMBO

**Topic: Effects of continuous professional development and clinical imaging guidelines on appropriateness of computed tomography examinations among young patients in Uganda.**

Ms Kiseambo evaluated CT referral practices and found many scans were requested without proper clinical justification. While training improved awareness of imaging guidelines, unnecessary scans persisted.

Her study underscores the need for combined educational and systemic support to improve decision-making, patient safety, and health system efficiency in low-resource settings.



## OLIVIA KITUUKA

**Topic: Informed consent process for emergency surgery at public and private teaching hospitals in urban Uganda**

Ms Kituuka assessed informed consent processes in emergency surgery and found inadequate disclosure of risks, alternative options, and poor understanding among patients and next of kin. She recommends public education, national policies, and institutional guidelines to strengthen informed consent practices in urgent care settings.



# to impact Uganda's health sector

## ALI KUDAMBA

**Topic: Anti-cancer activity and safety of *Rhoicissus Tridentata* (LF.) wild & R.B. drumm. as used in the treatment of prostate cancer in Elgon sub-region, Uganda.**

Mr Kudamba investigated the traditional use of *Rhoicissus tridentata* for prostate cancer. His work documented its phytochemical composition, safety, and anticancer activity, providing evidence to support future



therapeutic development and integration of traditional remedies into cancer care strategies.

## ARTHUR KWIZERA

**Topic: Acute hypoxaemic respiratory failure in Uganda**

Kwizera studied acute hypoxaemic respiratory failure and acute respiratory distress syndrome across 17 hospitals. He demonstrated that high-flow nasal cannula oxygen therapy improves survival and can be safely administered by

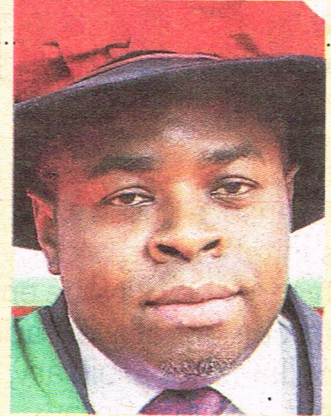
general health workers outside intensive care units.



## KAMADA LUWERE

**Topic: Gut microbiome composition, immune response and genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease and related dementia**

Mr Luwere investigated drivers of Alzheimer's disease in Ugandans over 60, linking reduced gut microbial diversity, inflammation, and APOE 4 genetic variants to disease risk. His study supports a multifactorial model connecting dysbiosis, immunity, and host genetics in dementia pathogenesis.



## MARIAM NAMUTEBI

Ms Namutebi assessed postpartum care in greater Mpigi, finding low facility readiness and high rates of postpartum haemorrhage among affected mothers.



## GRACE NABAKOOZA

Ms Nabakooza modelled influenza transmission in Africa using whole-genome sequencing data from Uganda. Her findings suggest stronger monitoring, clear alignment of institutional objectives and sustained investment in ICT



## MERCY MUWEMA

**Topic: Assessment of the quality of perinatal care and development of an improved model to reduce perinatal deaths in Bunyoro sub-region**

Ms Muwema identified staffing shortages, inadequate equipment, and non-compliance with WHO standards. She developed a context-specific model to improve care quality, recommending interventions in financing, staffing, infrastructure, and process improvement.

