



Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC)

JCRC CELEBRATES YET ANOTHER MILESTONE, CAP ACCREDITATION.



H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
JCRC Patron



Prof. Justin Epelu-Oplo
Chairman Board of Trustees



Prof. Peter Mugenyi
Executive Director



Dr. Clissy Kityo Mutuluza
Deputy Executive Director



JCRC Head Quarters at Lubowa

The Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC) is a Centre of Excellence that was started by H.E. President Yoweri Museveni in 1991 to address the very serious problem of HIV/AIDS, which was at its peak by that time. JCRC was born out of a collaboration between the Ministries of Health - primarily responsible for policy; Defence - which provided the initial infrastructure; and Makerere University Medical School (currently College of Health Sciences) - which provides some of the researchers with whom JCRC works.

In the 25 years of its existence, the JCRC has been a Centre of Excellence that has over the years participated in a number of groundbreaking HIV/AIDS trials that have informed treatment and prevention policy both nationally and internationally. The JCRC pioneered use of Antiretroviral drugs in sub-Saharan Africa through a trial in 1992 to evaluate the lowest effective dose of Zidovudine (AZT) which was the first HIV drug on the market. Other key studies include the first HIV preventive and therapeutic vaccine trials in Africa, the immunogenicity studies for the first HIV perinatal vaccine study in Africa conducted in collaboration with Makerere University - Johns Hopkins University (MUJHU) research collaboration, the biggest second line trial in Africa.

This research has been supported by the state of the art Laboratories in collaboration with National Institutes of Health (NIH), the World Health Organization (WHO) among other partners. The Center has now reached the epitome of quality laboratories by getting accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Laboratory Accreditation program using the most scientifically rigorous customized requirements in the world. This accreditation is unique for Uganda in that JCRC has become the first laboratory to be accredited for a wide test menu of over 50 tests. This accreditation puts JCRC at the same level of quality as the best laboratories in America and other developed countries and the centre has joined an exclusive club of the few CAP certified laboratories in the world.

The Lab accreditation program by CAP was established in 1961. In 1995 it received approval as an accrediting organization under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments

of 1988 (CLIA) by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an agency within the United States(US) Department of Health and Human Services. The mission was to improve patient safety by advancing the quality of pathology and laboratory services through education, standard setting, and ensuring laboratories meet or exceed regulatory requirement.

The accreditation program examines preanalytical, analytical, and postanalytical aspects of quality management in the laboratory. These include the performance and monitoring of general quality control (QC), test methodologies and specification, reagents used, controls and media, equipment, specimen handling, test reporting and internal performance assessment. In addition, personnel requirements, safety, document management and other administrative practices are monitored.

Four standards constitute the core principles of the CAP accreditation program, namely;

1. Standard 1 relates to the qualifications, responsibilities and the role of the laboratory director. It discusses which responsibilities may be delegated as well as the role of a consulting pathologist if indicated.
2. Standard 11 Concerns the physical resources of the laboratory, including space, instrumentation, furnishings, communication and data processing systems, reagents and other supplies, ventilation, piped gases and water, public utilities, storage and waste disposal, and protection from hazardous condition of patients, laboratory personnel and visitors.
3. Standard 111 encompasses quality management. This includes discussion of test system validations, quality control of pre analytical, analytical and post analytical processes, proficiency testing (or periodic alternative assessment of the laboratory test performance) and ongoing performance improvement.
4. Standard 1V includes the administrative requirements of the program. Laboratories must comply with the requirements specified in the Standards; the terms of accreditation and an interim self inspection are the cornerstone of the inspection requirements.

By attaining the CAP accreditation, JCRC satisfies all the above requirements and this means JCRC laboratory results can be accepted all over the world.

Benefits of CAP accreditation to JCRC include:

1. CAP will enhance compliance through the guidance of the most comprehensive scientifically endorsed laboratory standards
2. Maintaining accuracy of test results and ensure accurate patient diagnosis
3. Increasing the value JCRC brings to collaborating organizations, customers and patients
4. Enhance quality of research and patient care standards
5. Attract more research activities and collaborations
6. Provision of unparalleled educational opportunities, through exchange of ideas, discussion, training and competency testing of personnel.
7. Recognition as a top performer and as institution committed to quality patient care.
8. Benefits from expert inspection teams that provide multidisciplinary approach advise
9. Useful inspection tools including inspection checklists.

Now that we have joined the exclusive club, the laboratory shall be monitored continuously by CAP through test controls, proficiency testing performance, corrective and preventive actions interventions, interim audit, deficiency resolution and a two yearly inspection.

When the Executive Director was asked of his major contribution as he retires next month, Professor Peter Mugenyi beaming with a huge smile responded "Attainment of CAP crowns it all. This is the ultimate test of quality the centre has worked for all these years and proves that JCRC is a true Centre of Excellence". He thanked the JCRC Patron and president of Uganda H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni also the founder, the JCRC Board headed by Prof. Oplo-Opelu and the entire fraternity of JCRC staff for the support they have given him during his time at the helm of the centre and that the sky is the limit for the incoming leadership.