

# Kigali Medical Center

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Kigali Adventist Medical Center (KAMC) is one of the eight medical institutions under the management of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda. It is located in the East-Central Rwanda Conference of the Rwanda Union Mission (RUM), Kigali City. KAMC was formally established on October 19, 1999. It started with the name of Polyclinique Adventiste de Kigali (PAK).<sup>1</sup>

## Historical Background

The funding for the establishment of KAMC came from 1993 General Conference Ingathering fund (about US\$300,000). The fund had been disbursed to the Indo-Africa Division with headquarters in Abidjan (which RUM belonged to before joining the East-Central Africa Division). The project was delayed by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi that left more than one million Tutsis dead.

In 1996 the RUM President Amon Rugerinyange enquired from the division and found that the project was still in the pipeline and he was given permission to go ahead with it. In 1997 RUM wrote to the Rwanda Ministry of Health about the establishment of the medical center. The ministry approved it without hesitation. RUM then faced a challenge as the division had no immediate funds, yet the Ministry of Health wanted the project to start immediately. In order to not embarrass the government, Dr. Uziel Kubwimana mobilized the few resources available at RUM and started the project. From the available resources, the physical facilities were refurbished and modified to fit a medical facility. Basic medical equipment (a microscope, lab equipment, a sterilizer, a tension meter, tables, beds for in-patients, medicine, files for the patients, and other basic facilities/equipment) was purchased.<sup>2</sup>

## Employee Recruitment

Employees were recruited immediately. Dr. Uziel Kubwimana became the director as well as the chief doctor. He worked with five nurses, four janitors, one laboratory attendant, and two security guards. The accountant was Esdras Mpysi, who also worked as the RUM treasurer. Alphonse Rwamamara from the East-Central Rwanda Field (now conference) replaced him as the accountant.<sup>3</sup>

## Services

On October 19, 1999, the medical center opened with the name of PAK. Medical services were limited to general medicine, as the only doctor (Dr. Uziel Kubwimana) was a general practitioner. The center provided 24-hour services for out-patients and in-patients. Prior to its opening, measures were devised to let people, especially Adventist Church members, know about it and spread the information. Thus, announcements were given in several churches. On the first day of its establishment, all patients were treated without charge. The majority were members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Patients were happy to have a nearby Church medical center, since most patients (both Adventist and non-Adventist) were reported to have seen a difference in the services provided by KAMC, compared to secular medical centers.<sup>4</sup>

## Challenges

When PAK (now KAMC) opened for business, it lacked specialized services and medical equipment such as gynecology services and equipment like echo-graph, dental services and dental equipment, modern beds for in-patients, subscription to medical insurance services like RAMA (a medical insurance coverage of civil employees where the government pays 85 percent of the total medical cost while the patient pays 15 percent), and funding-features which secular medical centers had.<sup>5</sup> PAK was only able to care for the few patients who could cover all medical expenses by themselves and those working in Adventist Church institutions who received partial reimbursement of their medical expenses from their employer.

To overcome those challenges, the Ministry of Health was approached. The ministry advised that in order to get support, including RAMA insurance, the medical center's name should change from Polyclinique Adventiste de Kigali (PAK) to Kigali Adventist Medical Center (KAMC).<sup>6</sup> Thus, in 2001, PAK changed to KAMC. Some equipment and facilities were provided by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and World Vision.

In 2002 dental services were introduced and were headed by Dr. Ang, while her husband, Dr. Venancial Ang (medical missionaries from the Philippines), became associate medical practitioner to Dr. Uziel. In order to attract funding from abroad, Dr. Venancial Ang was made the director and Dr. Uziel was made the associate director. In 2006, when Dr. Uziel Kubwimana retired, the new RUM President Hesron Byiringiro and his team decided to cut expenses at KAMC and to have only one director and no associate. Thus, Dr. Venancial Ang was appointed as the new director, and he served in that capacity until 2010 when he was replaced by Dr. Tommy Wuysang.<sup>7</sup>

## Achievements

From its establishment in 1999 until the present, patients have increased in number. On average, between 30 and 50 patients visit KAMC daily.<sup>8</sup> Patients include both foreigners and nationals, those with and those without medical insurance.

The medical facilities and equipment have been improved. KAMC has expanded laboratory and cardiac services, improved in-patient rooms, and increased accommodation for both VIPs and ordinary people. KAMC now provides services to patients with medical insurance (RAMA).

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## NOTES

1. Uziel Kubwimana, interview with the author on October 14, 2021, in Kigali. Dr. Uziel Kubwimana was the director of the Health and Temperance Department, RUM before becoming the founder and director of the KAMC from 1999-2006. He is a retired doctor and currently is serving as a church elder at Kagarama SDA Church, East-Central Rwanda Conference, Kigali city.
2. Uziel Kubwimana, interview with the author on October 14, 2021, in Kigali.
3. Ibid.
4. Odeth Mukakigeri, interview with the author on October 12, 2021, in Kigali. Odeth Mukakigeri was one of the first nurses.
5. Uziel Kubwimana, interview with the author on October 14, 2021, in Kigali.
6. Ibid.
7. Dr. Tommy Wuysang is a general practitioner and cardiologist from Indonesia. He has served as the KAMC director from 2010 to present. He is also a missionary pastor.
8. Ibid.

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