

# One On One With Dr Stephen K. Karanja, On Why the Government Should Come Clean On the Tetanus Vaccination Campaign [interview]

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## Full Text

Who is Dr Stephen Karanja?

I am a practicing consultant obstetrician and gynecologist, chairman of the Kenya Catholic Doctors Association (KCDA) and also a member of the executive board of the Health commission of the Kenya Catholic Bishops Conference (KCCB).

The Catholic Church has come out strongly against the tetanus campaign by the government. What is your take?

We have had vaccinations in this country previously; in fact we have had vaccine campaigns for polio all through. There has been widespread public education on the need to do this. It has been done in the Catholic churches, it has been done everywhere and the bishops are asking, are we having a crisis of tetanus and the government is not saying?

Because if there is a crisis of tetanus shouldn't the government tell the people?

That is what the bishops are asking the government. Do you have this problem, and if you have why had you not informed the people? Why have you not done the campaign? How come the people don't know and we don't know?

Apart from the government, the Catholic Church is the second in provision of health in country. If the government was going to conduct a health campaign, isn't it right to inform the church so that it can open its facilities and its staff to combine forces to reach as many people as possible.

Under normal circumstances that need a tetanus vaccination, what does the vaccine protect against?

The cause of tetanus is a bacteria called clostridium tetani, it is found everywhere, in the soil, in the air and on

every rotting thing, therefore every country as it develops its herd immunity is to continuously increase the number of people who have anti bodies against tetanus.

Normally, tetanus vaccination is given to anybody who is injured, if you have a cut a wound or any injury, everybody should have tetanus vaccination.

Also all women during pregnancy are given two vaccinations. After birth all children during their normal six vaccine programme, one of the vaccines always given is tetanus toxoid in the group that is called DPT, Diphtheria Pertussis and Tetanus.

What would be the rationale of ministry of health starting it on girls of 14 to 49 years? As a doctor working in this country, I am alive to the common sense that every doctor knows that girls from 9 years, 10 years to 13 years are becoming pregnant and getting children. Aren't these the ones we should be protecting?

What is the role of World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the tetanus vaccine campaign?

In 1972, WHO started a research programme on anti- fertility vaccines, by 1992 (20 years later) they had developed an anti fertility vaccine that had two components; one of them was tetanus the other was a very special hormone in women called Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (hCG) which has two sub units, one sub unit is called the a- sub unit and other is the beta-hCG which is the active sub unit. They developed this vaccine using a combination of tetanus and beta sub unit of hCG.

This is nothing secret it's in the public domain and all over the internet.

Have WHO ever used the vaccine anywhere in the world apart from Kenya?

Yes, the first time they used it was in Mexico in 1993 and then in 1994 they used it in Nicaragua, the same year (1994) they used it in Philippines and what is annoying is that at that time these countries were 99 percent Catholic.

They vaccinated people with that poisoned vaccine which was tetanus vaccination and poisoned millions of women in the three countries affecting nearly ten million catholic women.

What is important and is in the public domain is that they were caught red handed, especially in the Philippines; somebody checked the vaccine they were using and found that it had hCG - the beta sub unit.

At first they denied and said that it was tested by the Catholic Church. They took it to a Lutheran facility, shock of their shocks, all the vials tested positive but the quantities were very low. The affected women have developed antibodies.

Is it the first time WHO and other organizations are doing such immunizations in Kenya?

There was a campaign in March this year.

The bishops still ask the government, has this vaccine been tested? Is it safe for our people? Can we test it together? The ministry of health refused.

The church sampled and tested it. Shock of shocks, the church was right it had beta sub unit of hCG.

What danger(s) do women who have already taken the jab face?

Happy are them because the church has talked twice. You need five vaccinations. There is hope they will not be poisoned by three doses. They need other two. Let them take responsibility and fail to go.

What was the response from the Ministry of Health over the concerns raised by the Catholic Church?

The ministry of Health has developed another line of argument that if we have tested the vaccine then we should send them the results. We sent them the results of March through e-mail so that they could not pretend that they did not have them.

Despite having the results, four days after sending, one of their doctors sent me an SMS asking me when I would give the results that was done in March. This was after the vaccination was over on October 19.

We sent them the results on October 16 and he wrote back on October 21 We have a problem in the country; Kenyans have been given vaccination of Tetanus toxoid. The question is this, is this vaccine safe?

Why did the Ministry refuse that we join together and test it, why are they writing on October 21 when we had agreed on October 13 in their own office. What they do not know is that the church sampled the vaccine and we are not going to give them the results yet.

How has the vaccination process been conducted in the field?

WHO employed their own people; they were using the Ministry of Health for logistics. It is the same WHO that poisoned Mexico, Nicaragua and Philippines, the same WHO that came here in 1995 with the same vaccine.

Again, God has been kind because I was in the meeting that took place in 1995 between the Catholic Church and the government. The Catholic Church asked, isn't this the same vaccine that had been used to poison people in other countries? But in a very strange twist of luck, the then Health Minister Prof Sam Ongeru, a medical professor said that the Catholic Church is a major partner in health care provision in the country and if it had doubts then the vaccine could not be given in the country.

He demanded the vaccine be tested. WHO refused, they took their vaccine and took off. Nobody in this country can talk of this vaccine when I am here. The ministry is not ready to be corrected even if you give them results.

The campaign was targeting girls and women mostly in remote areas, where giving birth at home is common and hard for them to access the tetanus vaccine. Would you support such a campaign if the vaccine was proven clean?

No. Those communities living way out there have a strong immunity. Their immunity is 100 times higher than that person living in this contaminated city of Nairobi.

Over 60 percent of all deliveries in Nairobi take place at home. The only difference is that they take place in the shanties where there is no toilet and water. Weigh out that in the countryside where there is water and free fresh air. That's where we were all born. We never got neo-natal tetanus.

There are other vaccination campaigns that have taken place recently like the polio one. Could it also be having some dangers to the children?

I have not tested that vaccine but I am very shocked on how they are giving it out. Traditionally the vaccine that was given for polio at childhood was enough. Now they are telling you that even if your child is fully immunized and wherever they find your child at home or at the roadside they give him.

They could be doing it for subliminal education. That is if you continuously give people vaccinations without any reason they become used to consuming them even if you bring a vaccine that is poisoned.

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