

Obituary for Professor Eliningaya John Kweka (1973-2025): A Fallen African Elephant

Humphrey Deogratias Mazigo^{a*} and Emmanuela Eusebio Ambrose^b

^aSchool of Public Health and School of Medicine, Department of Medical Parasitology and Entomology, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania; ^bBugando Medical Centre and Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Mwanza, Tanzania

Correspondence to Humphrey Deogratias Mazigo (humphremazigo@gmail.com)

Professor Eliningaya John Kweka was a Tanzanian medical entomologist and research professor, widely recognized for his work on malaria and vector biology. He was born on 18th February, 1973 at Nshara village, north Machame ward of Hai district, along the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. He was born into a family of educators; his father and mother were teachers. His father Mwalimu John Kweka worked as a teacher at the Teachers training college and his mother as a primary school teacher.

He began his education at Mazoezi Primary School, Monduli district, Arusha region, Tanzania where he studied from 1981 to 1987. From 1988 to 1991, he pursued his ordinary level education at Moringe Sokoine Secondary School in Monduli District, Arusha Region. He then advanced to Old Moshi Secondary School in Kilimanjaro region, where he completed his advanced level studies between 1992 and 1994.



Prof. Kweka joined the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where he studied for a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Chemistry from 1995 to 1999. He continued with postgraduate studies at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College (KCMUCO), under Tumaini University in Tanzania, between 2004 and 2006, and obtained a Master of Science in Medical Parasitology and Entomology. From 2009 to 2012, he pursued a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Vector Ecology and Control at Makumira University in Tanzania, in collaboration with the University of California Irvine (UCI). He later undertook postdoctoral training at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in collaboration with the National Institute for Medical Research (Amani Research Centre) in Tanzania between 2012 to 2014. In the field of leadership and management, he obtained a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Leadership and Management from the Institute of Accountancy Arusha (IAA) in Tanzania between 2021 and 2022.

At the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS), Prof. Kweka rose through the ranks of senior lecturer in 2011 to full professor in November 2021. He was appointed Research Professor of Medical Entomology until his death in December 2025.

Prof Kweka was a prominent medical entomologist and researcher with his research work focused on developing a deeper understanding of malaria vector ecology and control across different settings, with the aim of estimating vector productivity in various land-use and agro-ecosystems. His studies include investigations into the fundamentals of malaria vector dynamics, such as risk factors influencing vector productivity and abundance in endemic populations, insecticide resistance, impact of various malaria interventions measures mainly insecticides treated mosquito nets and insecticide residual sprays and natural products trials and mosquitoicidal properties. His research group was also engaged in screening different insecticides for public health approval, with a particular emphasis on vectors of malaria, dengue, and sleeping sickness. He has published extensively (over 200 articles in peer reviewed journals and book chapters) in the area of malaria vector biology (access his publication at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Kweka%20EJ&ac=yes&cauthor_id=None&user_filter=&schema=none&whatsnew=None&show_snippets=on&sort=relevance&sort_order=desc&format=summary&size=10 and https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=Kweka+EJ&btnG=). He achieved a total of 5,692 citations, demonstrating the contribution of his work in malaria and vector biology. In research area, He received a number of research grants from different funding organizations and research and development grants from commercial companies. He worked with

different partners to implement different research project on malaria vector biology and testing different interventions in Muheza and lower Moshi experimental trials and community studies in Tanzania.

FIGURE 1: Prof. Kweka Collecting Malaria Vectors Larvae and Adult in Various Field Sites in Tanzania



Since 2008, Prof. Kweka was a full-time employee of the Tropical Pesticides Research Institute (TPRI), which was later restructured into the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA). Within TPRI, he served in several administrative and managerial positions. At the time of his passing, Prof. Kweka was the Head of the Pesticides Bioefficacy Section at TPHPA. Before joining TPRI, Prof. Kweka worked with the Mama Clementina Foundation from 1999 to 2001, the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre under the Malaria Joint Programme from 2001 to 2007, and the Ifakara Health Institute from 2006 to 2007. He was a member of different professional bodies and societies including Pan African Mosquito Association (PAMCA), Tanzania Entomological Society and Tanzania Vector Control Technical Working Group (VCTWG). He worked very closely with the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) on countrywide monitoring of insecticide resistance among malaria vectors, and with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) on nationwide malaria vector surveillance.

The news of Prof. Kweka's death left many who knew him in deep shock and disbelief. His legacy will continue to guide and inspire generations in the field of medical entomology, particularly in malaria vector biology and control. He will be dearly missed by his family, relatives, friends, and colleagues. Our deepest condolences go to his family, colleagues, and all whose lives he touched. His loss is profoundly felt, yet his contributions and spirit will forever resonate within the medical entomology community and beyond. Prof. Kweka passed away on 24th December 2025 and was buried at his home in Nshara Village, North Machame Ward of Hai District, on the evening of 27th December 2025. Prof. Kweka is survived by his wife, Dr. Asanterabi Lowasa, and their two sons, Patrick and Gerald.

Cite this article as Mazigo DH & Ambrose EE. Obituary for Professor Eliningaya John Kweka (1973-2025): A fallen African Elephant. *East Afr Science J.* 2026; 8(1): 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.24248/easci.v8i1.128>

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