

Hospital awaits coroner's inquest as family alleges negligence during surgery

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The late Blessing Okolie

The Medical Director of [OAR Medical Centre](#), Dr Abiodun Ojifinni, has said the hospital is awaiting the outcome of a coroner's inquest to determine the cause of Blessing Okolie's death, as her family alleges medical negligence in the surgery that preceded her death.

Speaking with The Guardian, Ojifinni maintained that the additional procedure carried out on the patient was a wound exploration to ensure sterility, and urged the public to await the inquest before drawing conclusions.

Okolie, a Lagos-based woman, died following complications after undergoing surgery for uterine fibroids at the private facility in Abule Egba, Lagos.

Ojifinni explained that complications emerged around the fifth day after the operation, prompting the hospital to commence management. He added that a friend of the deceased later requested her transfer to another hospital, a move the facility approved by issuing a referral letter.

According to him, the patient was subsequently taken to another medical centre, where further tests were conducted, though the hospital does not currently have access to the results.

Addressing allegations that a surgical instrument was left inside the patient's body, necessitating a second surgery, Ojifinni did not confirm the claim and reiterated that the coroner's inquest would ascertain the actual cause of death.

However, the deceased's family presented a different account, alleging that negligence during the initial surgery led to her death.

Okolie's sister, Beady Nnanna, told The Guardian that she took her sister to OAR Medical Centre, Ilepo, Abule Egba, on March 27, following a recommendation, and that the surgery was carried out on March 28 after years of living with fibroids.

She said concerns arose shortly after the procedure, alleging that Okolie was given a beverage about four hours after surgery and continued to experience severe pain in the days that followed.

According to her, by March 31, the patient's abdomen had become swollen and distended, and repeated requests for a scan were not granted.

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Nnanna alleged that about 10 days after the surgery, an independent scan conducted at another facility revealed a pair of surgical scissors inside Okolie's abdomen.

She said an emergency second procedure was conducted at OAR Medical Centre to remove the object, but her condition deteriorated, and requests for referral to a better-equipped hospital were initially not granted.

The hospital later approved her transfer to the [Lagos State University Teaching Hospital \(LASUTH\)](#) on April 11, where she was admitted into intensive care. According to the family, doctors at LASUTH indicated that her organs had been severely compromised due to infection, and she subsequently died.

Ojifinni acknowledged that an additional procedure was carried out but clarified that it was not a full surgical operation, describing it as a wound exploration undertaken to ensure the patient's stability.

The family has demanded the suspension of Ojifinni and the closure of the hospital pending investigation, insisting that those responsible should be held accountable.

“The medical negligence that resulted in the untimely death of Blessing must not go unpunished. This is about accountability and ensuring the safety of all patients,” the family said.

They also launched a petition on Change.org seeking justice and improved patient care safeguards.

Meanwhile, the National President of the Association of Nigerian Private Medical Practitioners, Dr Kayode Adesola, urged caution, emphasising the need for a thorough investigation before responsibility is assigned.

He noted that leaving surgical scissors in a patient's abdomen is highly unusual, particularly in fibroid surgery, and added that any confirmed negligence would attract disciplinary measures in line with medical regulations.